

# SELECTIONS FROM BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

EDITED BY  
E. A. J. MARSH



LONDON  
G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.

---

CALCUTTA, BOMBAY & MADRAS  
LONGMANS, GREEN & CO., LTD.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIFE OF BOSWELL - - - - -	vii
BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS OF JOHNSON - - - - -	i
JOHNSON AT OXFORD - - - - -	8
JOHNSON BECOMES A SCHOOLMASTER AND MARRIES -	13
JOHNSON GOES TO LONDON, 1737 - - - - -	16
"LONDON, A POEM IN IMITATION OF THE THIRD SATIRE OF JUVENAL" - - - - -	19
ISSUE OF THE PLAN FOR A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE - - - - -	23
PRODUCTION OF "IRENE," 1749 - - - - -	27
"THE RAMBLER" - - - - -	29
JOHNSON'S FRIENDSHIP WITH LANGTON AND BEAU- CLERK - - - - -	31
"A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE" - -	34
BOSWELL MEETS JOHNSON - - - - -	42
DR. OLIVER GOLDSMITH - - - - -	47
JOHNSON'S PECULIARITIES - - - - -	50
JOHNSON AND KING GEORGE III. - - - - -	52
A DINNER AT BOSWELL'S LODGINGS - - - - -	57
A DINNER AT DILLY'S - - - - -	61
JOHNSON AND WILKES - - - - -	69
"LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS" - - - - -	79
JOHNSONIANA - - - - -	87
DEATH OF JOHNSON - - - - -	96
NOTES - - - - -	105
BIOGRAPHIES - - - - -	111
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE - - - - -	121

## LIFE OF BOSWELL

JAMES BOSWELL, the eldest son of Lord Auchinleck (pronounced Affléck), was born in 1740; he was educated at the High School, Edinburgh, and at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. While still a boy, he kept a journal and wrote poems and prologues. At the age of twenty he came to London, and on a second visit, three years later, he was introduced to Johnson. In August of the same year he went to Utrecht to study law; he remained at Utrecht for one winter only, and spent the next two years travelling through Europe, visiting celebrities, Voltaire, Rousseau and Paoli, the Corsican patriot. On his return he was admitted advocate, and early in 1768 he published his *Account of Corsica*, which Johnson described as "in a very high degree delightful and curious," though he wished Boswell could empty his head of Corsica, which he thought had filled it rather too long. In 1769 Boswell married his cousin Margaret, and thenceforward his father allowed him £300 a year, and paid his debts from time to time. Four years later Boswell was admitted a member of the Literary Club, mainly through Johnson's influence; in August of this same year, 1773, the pair undertook a journey to the Hebrides lasting ninety-four days. Johnson wrote of it as the pleasantest tour he had ever made, and published an account of it in 1775, called *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*; Boswell's *Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides* was not produced till 1785. In 1775 Boswell entered the Inner Temple, but was not called to the English Bar for eleven years; and his father dying in 1782, he succeeded to a fortune of £1600 a year. The friends saw each other



for the last time on June 30th, 1784, at a "friendly, confidential dinner with Sir Joshua Reynolds, no other company being present." It has been reckoned that Boswell met Johnson on one hundred and eighty days, exclusive of the tour to the Hebrides. In 1789 Boswell's wife died, and from that time he gave way more and more to habits of drinking. Meanwhile he was composing *The Life of Johnson*, the first edition of which appeared in 1791; it met with a very favourable reception, and a second edition was produced two years later; while revising his work for a third edition, Boswell was seized with a fever, and died in London, May, 1795.

# SELECTIONS FROM BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON

## BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS OF JOHNSON

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield, in Staffordshire, on the 18th of September, N.S., 1709; and his initiation into the Christian church was not delayed; for his baptism is recorded, in the register of St. Mary's parish in that city, to have been performed on the day of his birth: his father is there styled *Gentleman*, a circumstance of which an ignorant panegyrist has praised him for not being proud; when the truth is, that the appellation of *Gentleman*, though now lost in the indiscriminate assumption of *Esquire*, was commonly taken by those who could not boast of gentility. His father was Michael Johnson, a native of Derbyshire, of obscure extraction, who settled in Lichfield as a bookseller and stationer. His mother was Sarah Ford, descended of an ancient race of substantial yeomanry in Warwickshire. They were well advanced in years when they married, and never had more than two children, both sons; Samuel, their first-born, who lived to be the illustrious character whose various excellence I am to endeavour to record, and Nathaniel, who died in his twenty-fifth year.

Mr. Michael Johnson was a man of a large and robust body, and of a strong and active mind; yet, as in the most solid rocks veins of unsound substance are often discovered, there was in him a mixture of that disease, the nature of which eludes the most minute inquiry, though the effects are well known to be a weariness of life, and unconcern about those things which agitate the greater part of mankind, and a general sensation of gloomy wretchedness. From him, then, his son inherited, with some other qualities, "a

vile melancholy," which, in his too strong expression of any disturbance of the mind, "made him mad all his life, at least not sober." Michael was, however, forced by the narrowness of his circumstances to be very diligent in business, not only in his shop, but by occasionally resorting to several towns in the neighbourhood, some of which were at a considerable distance from Lichfield. At that time booksellers' shops in the provincial towns of England were very rare, so that there was not one even in Birmingham, in which town old Mr. Johnson used to open a shop every market-day. He was a pretty good Latin scholar, and a citizen so creditable as to be made one of the magistrates of Lichfield; and, being a man of good sense, and skill in his trade, he acquired a reasonable share of wealth, of which, however, he afterwards lost the greatest part, by engaging unsuccessfully in a manufacture of parchment.

Johnson's mother was a woman of distinguished understanding. I asked his old school-fellow, Mr. Hector, a surgeon, of Birmingham, if she was not vain of her son. He said, "she had too much good sense to be vain, but she knew her son's value." Her piety was not inferior to her understanding; and to her must be ascribed those early impressions of religion upon the mind of her son, from which the world afterwards derived so much benefit. He told me that he remembered distinctly having had the first notice of Heaven, "a place to which good people went," and Hell, "a place to which bad people went," communicated to him by her, when a little child in bed with her; and that it might be the better fixed in his memory, she sent him to repeat it to Thomas Jackson, their man-servant: he not being in the way, this was not done; but there was no occasion for any artificial aid for its preservation.

"When Dr. Sacheverel was at Lichfield, Johnson was not quite three years old. My grandfather Hammond observed him at the cathedral perched upon his father's shoulders, listening and gaping at the much celebrated preacher. Mr. Hammond asked Mr. Johnson how he

could possibly think of bringing such an infant to church, and in the midst of so great a crowd. He answered, because it was impossible to keep him at home; for, young as he was, he believed he had caught the public spirit and zeal for Sacheverel, and would have stayed for ever in the church, satisfied with beholding him."

Nor can I omit a little instance of that jealous independence of spirit, and impetuosity of temper, which never forsook him. The fact was acknowledged to me by himself, upon the authority of his mother. One day when the servant, who used to be sent to school to conduct him home, had not come in time, he set out by himself, though he was then so near-sighted, that he was obliged to stoop down on his hands and knees to take a view of the kennel before he ventured to step over it. His schoolmistress, afraid that he might miss his way, or fall into the kennel, or be run over by a cart, followed him at some distance. He happened to turn about and perceive her. Feeling her careful attention as an insult to his manliness, he ran back to her in a rage, and beat her, as well as his strength would permit.

Of the power of his memory, for which he was all his life eminent to a degree almost incredible, the following early instance was told me in his presence at Lichfield, in 1776, by his step-daughter, Mrs. Lucy Porter, as related to her by his mother. When he was a child in petticoats, and had learnt to read, Mrs. Johnson one morning put the Common Prayer Book into his hands, pointed to the collect for the day, and said, "Sam, you must get this by heart." She went upstairs, leaving him to study it: but by the time she had reached the second floor, she heard him following her. "What's the matter?" said she. "I can say it," he replied; and repeated it distinctly, though he could not have read it more than twice.

But there has been another story of his infant precocity generally circulated, and generally believed, the truth of which I am to refute upon his own authority. It is told, that, when a child of three years old, he

chanced to tread upon a duckling, the eleventh of a brood, and killed it; upon which, it is said, he dictated to his mother the following epitaph:—

“ Here lies good master duck,  
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on;  
If it had lived, it had been *good luck*,  
For then we'd had an *odd one*.”

There is surely internal evidence that this little composition combines in it what no child of three years old could produce, without an extension of its faculties by immediate inspiration; yet Mrs. Lucy Porter, Dr. Johnson's step-daughter, positively maintained to me, in his presence, that there could be no doubt of the truth of this anecdote, for she had heard it from his mother. So difficult is it to obtain an authentic relation of facts, and such authority may there be for error; for he assured me, that his father made the verses, and wished to pass them for his child's. He added, “My father was a foolish old man; that is to say, foolish in talking of his children.”

Young Johnson had the misfortune to be much afflicted with the scrofula, or king's evil, which disfigured a countenance naturally well formed, and hurt his visual nerves so much, that he did not see at all with one of his eyes, though its appearance was little different from that of the other. It has been said, that he contracted this grievous malady from his nurse. His mother, yielding to the superstitious notion, which, it is wonderful to think, prevailed so long in this country, as to the virtue of the regal touch, carried him to London, where he was actually touched by Queen Anne. Mrs. Johnson, indeed, as Mr. Hector informed me, acted by the advice of the celebrated Sir John Floyer, then a physician in Lichfield. Johnson used to talk of this very frankly; and Mrs. Piozzi has preserved his very picturesque description of the scene, as it remained upon his fancy. Being asked, if he could remember Queen Anne, “He had,” he said, “a confused, but somehow a sort of solemn recollection of a lady in diamonds, and a long black hood.” This touch, however, was without any effect.



He was first taught to read English by Dame Oliver, a widow, who kept a school for young children in Lichfield. He told me she could read the black letter, and asked him to borrow for her, from his father, a Bible in that character. When he was going to Oxford, she came to take leave of him, brought him, in the simplicity of her kindness, a present of gingerbread, and said he was the best scholar she ever had. He delighted in mentioning this early compliment; adding, with a smile, that "this was as high a proof of his merit as he could conceive." His next instructor in English was a master, whom, when he spoke of him to me, he familiarly called 'Tom Brown, who, said he, "published a spelling-book, and dedicated it to the UNIVERSE: but, I fear, no copy of it can now be had."

He began to learn Latin with Mr. Hawkins, usher, or undermaster of Lichfield school, "a man," said he, "very skilful in his little way." With him he continued two years, and then rose to be under the care of Mr. Hunter, the head master, who, according to his account, "was very severe, and wrongheadedly severe. He used," said he, "to beat us unmercifully; and he did not distinguish between ignorance and negligence: for he would beat a boy equally for not knowing a thing, as for neglecting to know it. He would ask a boy a question, and if he did not answer it, he would beat him, without considering whether he had an opportunity of knowing how to answer it. For instance, he would call up a boy and ask him Latin for a candlestick, which the boy could not expect to be asked. Now, Sir, if a boy could answer every question, there would be no need of a master to teach him."

It is, however, but justice to the memory of Mr. Hunter to mention, that though he might err in being too severe, the school of Lichfield was very respectable in his time.

Indeed, Johnson was very sensible how much he owed to Mr. Hunter. Mr. Langton one day asked him how he had acquired so accurate a knowledge of Latin, in which, I believe, he was exceeded by no man of his time: he said, "My master whipped me very well."

Without that, Sir, I should have done nothing." He told Mr. Langton, that while Hunter was flogging his boys unmercifully, he used to say, "And this I do to save you from the gallows." Johnson, upon all occasions, expressed his approbation of enforcing instruction by means of the rod. "I would rather," said he, "have the rod to be the general terror to all, to make them learn, than tell a child, if you do thus, or thus, you will be more esteemed than your brothers or sisters. The rod produces an effect which terminates in itself. A child is afraid of being whipped, and gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas, by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundation of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other."

When Johnson saw some young ladies in Lincolnshire who were remarkably well behaved, owing to their mother's strict discipline and severe correction, he exclaimed, in one of Shakspeare's lines a little varied,

*"Rod, I will honour thee for this thy duty."*

That superiority over his fellows, which he maintained with so much dignity in his march through life, was not assumed from vanity and ostentation, but was the natural and constant effect of those extraordinary powers of mind, of which he could not but be conscious by comparison; the intellectual difference, which in other cases of comparison of characters, is often a matter of undecided contest, being as clear in his case as the superiority of stature in some men above others. Johnson did not strut or stand on tip-toe; he only did not stoop. From his earliest years, his superiority was perceived and acknowledged. He was from the beginning a king of men. His school-fellow, Mr. Hector, has obligingly furnished me with many particulars of his boyish days; and assured me that he never knew him corrected at school, but for talking and diverting other boys from their business. He seemed to learn by intuition; for though indolence and procrastination were inherent in his constitution, whenever he made an exertion he did more than any one else. In short,

he is a memorable instance of what has been often observed, that the boy is the man in miniature; and that the distinguishing characteristics of each individual are the same, through the whole course of life. His favourites used to receive very liberal assistance from him; and such was the submission and deference with which he was treated, such the desire to obtain his regard, that three of the boys, of whom Mr. Hector was sometimes one, used to come in the morning as his humble attendants, and carry him to school. One in the middle stooped, while he sat upon his back, and one on each side supported him; and thus he was borne triumphant. Such a proof of the early predominance of intellectual vigour is very remarkable, and does honour to human nature. Talking to me once himself of his being much distinguished at school, he told me, "They never thought to raise me by comparing me to any one; they never said, Johnson is as good a scholar as such a one; but such a one is as good a scholar as Johnson; and this was said but of one, but of Lowe; and I do not think he was as good a scholar."

He discovered a great ambition to excel, which roused him to counteract his indolence. He was uncommonly inquisitive; and his memory was so tenacious, that he never forgot anything that he either heard or read. Mr. Hector remembers having recited to him eighteen verses, which, after a little pause, he repeated *verbatim*, varying only one epithet, by which he improved the line.

He never joined with the other boys in their ordinary diversions; his only amusement was in winter, when he took a pleasure in being drawn upon the ice by a boy barefooted, who pulled him along by a garter fixed round him; no very easy operation, as his size was remarkably large. His defective sight, indeed, prevented him from enjoying the common sports; and he once pleasantly remarked to me, "how wonderfully well he had contrived to be idle without them."



## JOHNSON AT OXFORD

[At the age of fifteen Johnson was removed to the school of Stourbridge in Worcestershire; he remained there little more than a year, and then returned home.]

The two years which he spent at home, after his return from Stourbridge, he passed in what he thought idleness, and was scolded by his father for his want of steady application. He had no settled plan of life, nor looked forward at all, but merely lived from day to day. Yet he read a great deal in a desultory manner, without any scheme of study, as chance threw books in his way, and inclination directed him through them. He used to mention one curious instance of his casual reading, when but a boy. Having imagined that his brother had hid some apples behind a large folio upon an upper shelf in his father's shop, he climbed up to search for them. There were no apples; but the large folio proved to be Petrarch, whom he had seen mentioned, in some preface, as one of the restorers of learning. His curiosity having been thus excited, he sat down with avidity, and read a great part of the book. What he read during these two years, he told me, was not works of mere amusement, "not voyages and travels, but all literature, Sir, all ancient writers, all manly; though but little Greek, only some of Anacreon and Hesiod: but in this irregular manner," added he, "I had looked into a great many books, which were not commonly known at the Universities, where they seldom read any books but what are put into their hands by their tutors; so that when I came to Oxford, Dr. Adams, now master of Pembroke College, told me, I was the best qualified for the University that he had ever known come there."

That a man in Mr. Michael Johnson's circumstances should think of sending his son to the expensive University of Oxford, at his own charge, seems very improbable. The subject was too delicate to question Johnson upon; but I have been assured by Dr. Taylor,

that the scheme never would have taken place, had not a gentleman of Shropshire, one of his schoolfellows, spontaneously undertaken to support him at Oxford, in the character of his companion; though, in fact, he never received any assistance whatever from that gentleman.

He however, went to Oxford, and was entered a commoner of Pembroke College, on the 31st of October, 1728, being then in his nineteenth year.

His tutor, Mr. Jorden, fellow of Pembroke, was not, it seems, a man of such abilities as we should conceive requisite for the instructor of Samuel Johnson, who gave me the following account of him: "He was a very worthy man, but a heavy man; and I did not profit much by his instructions. Indeed, I did not attend him much. The first day after I came to college I waited upon him, and then stayed away four. On the sixth, Mr. Jorden asked me why I had not attended. I answered, I had been sliding in Christ Church meadow. And this I said with as much *nonchalance* as I am now talking to you. I had no notion that I was wrong or irreverent to my tutor." BOSWELL. "That, Sir, was great fortitude of mind." JOHNSON. "No, Sir; stark insensibility."

The "morbid melancholy," which was lurking in his constitution, and to which we may ascribe those particularities, and that aversion to regular life, which, at a very early period, marked his character, gathered such strength in his twentieth year, as to afflict him in a dreadful manner. While he was at Lichfield, in the college vacation of the year 1729, he felt himself overwhelmed with an horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery.

From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved, and all his labours, and all his enjoyments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence.

The particular course of his reading while at Oxford, and during the time of vacation which he passed at

home, cannot be traced. Enough has been said of his irregular mode of study. He told me, that from his earliest years he loved to read poetry, but hardly ever read any poem to an end; that he read Shakspeare at a period so early, that the speech of the Ghost in *Hamlet* terrified him when he was alone; that Horace's *Odes* were the compositions in which he took most delight, and it was long before he liked his *Epistles* and *Satires*. He told me what he read *solidly* at Oxford was Greek; not the Grecian historians, but Homer and Euripides, and now and then a little Epigram; that the study of which he was the most fond was Metaphysics, but he had not read much, even in that way. I always thought that he did himself injustice in his account of what he had read, and that he must have been speaking with reference to the vast portion of study which is possible, and to which a few scholars in the whole history of literature have attained; for when I once asked him whether a person, whose name I have now forgotten, studied hard, he answered, "No, Sir. I do not believe he studied hard. I never knew a man who studied hard. I conclude, indeed, from the effects, that some men have studied hard, as Bentley and Clarke." Trying him by that criterion upon which he formed his judgement of others, we may be absolutely certain, both from his writings and his conversation, that his reading was very extensive. Dr. Adam Smith, than whom few were better judges on this subject, once observed to me, that "Johnson knew more books than any man alive." He had a peculiar facility in seizing at once what was valuable in any book, without submitting to the labour of perusing it from beginning to end. He had, from the irritability of his constitution, at all times, an impatience and hurry when he either read or wrote. A certain apprehension arising from novelty made him write his first exercise at college twice over; but he never took that trouble with any other composition; and we shall see that his most excellent works were struck off at a heat, with rapid exertion.

No man had a more ardent love of literature, or a

higher respect for it, than Johnson. His apartment in Pembroke College was that upon the second floor over the gateway. The enthusiast of learning will ever contemplate it with veneration. One day, while he was sitting in it quite alone, Dr. Panting, then master of the College, whom he called "a fine Jacobite fellow," overheard him uttering this soliloquy in his strong emphatic voice: "Well, I have a mind to see what is done in other places of learning. I'll go and visit the Universities abroad. I'll go to France and Italy. I'll go to Padua. And I'll mind my business. For an *Athenian* blockhead is the worst of all blockheads."

Dr. Adams told me that Johnson, while he was at Pembroke College, "was caressed and loved by all about him, was a gay and frolicsome fellow, and passed there the happiest part of his life." But this is a striking proof of the fallacy of appearances, and how little any of us know of the real internal state even of those whom we see most frequently; for the truth is, that he was then 'depressed by poverty, and irritated by disease. When I mentioned to him this account as given me by Dr. Adams, he said, "Ah, Sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority."

I do not find that he formed any close intimacies with his fellow-collegians. But Dr. Adams told me, that he contracted a love and regard for Pembroke College, which he retained to the last. A short time before his death he sent to that college a present of all his works, to be deposited in their library; and he had thoughts of leaving to it his house at Lichfield; but his friends who were about him very properly dissuaded him from it, and he bequeathed it to some poor relations. He took a pleasure in boasting of the many eminent men who had been educated at Pembroke. Being himself a poet, Johnson was peculiarly happy in mentioning how many of the sons of Pembroke were poets; adding, with a smile of sportive triumph, "Sir we are a nest of singing-birds."



He was not, however, blind to what he thought the defects of his own college: and I have, from the information of Dr. Taylor, a very strong instance of that rigid honesty which he ever inflexibly preserved. Taylor had obtained his father's consent to be entered of Pembroke, that he might be with his schoolfellow Johnson, with whom, though some years older than himself, he was very intimate. This would have been a great comfort to Johnson. But he fairly told Taylor that he could not, in conscience, suffer him to enter where he knew he could not have an able tutor. He then made inquiry all round the University, and having found that Mr. Bateman, of Christ Church, was the tutor of highest reputation, Taylor was entered of that college. Mr. Bateman's lectures were so excellent, that Johnson used to come and get them at second-hand from Taylor, till his poverty being so extreme, that his shoes were worn out, and his feet appeared through them, he saw that this humiliating circumstance was perceived by the Christ Church men, and he came no more. He was too proud to accept of money, and somebody having set a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation. How must we feel when we read such an anecdote of Samuel Johnson!

The *res angusta domi* prevented him from having the advantage of a complete academical education. The friend to whom he had trusted for support had deceived him. His debts in college, though not great, were increasing; and his scanty remittances from Lichfield, which had all along been made with great difficulty, could be supplied no longer, his father having fallen into a state of insolvency. Compelled, therefore, by irresistible necessity, he left the college in autumn 1731, without a degree, having been a member of it little more than three years.

And now (I had almost said *poor*) Samuel Johnson returned to his native city, destitute, and not knowing how he should gain even a decent livelihood. His father's misfortunes in trade rendered him unable to support his son; and for some time there appeared no

means by which he could maintain himself. In the December of this year [1731] his father died.

The state of poverty in which he died appears from a note in one of Johnson's little diaries of the following year, which strongly displays his spirit and virtuous dignity of mind. "I laid by eleven guineas on this day, when I received twenty pounds, being all that I have reason to hope for out of my father's effects, previous to the death of my mother; an event which I pray God may be very remote. I now therefore see that I must make my own fortune. Meanwhile, let me take care that the powers of my mind be not debilitated by poverty, and that indigence do not force me into any criminal act."

## JOHNSON BECOMES A SCHOOLMASTER AND MARRIES

IN the forlorn state of his circumstances, he accepted of an offer to be employed as usher, in the school of Market Bosworth, in Leicestershire, to which it appears, from one of his little fragments of a diary, that he went on foot, on the 16th of July [1732].

This employment was very irksome to him in every respect, and he complained grievously of it in his letters to his friend Mr. Hector, who was now settled as a surgeon at Birmingham. The letters are lost; but Mr. Hector recollects his writing "that the poet had described the dull sameness of his existence in these words, '*Vitam continet una dies*' (one day contains the whole of my life); that it was unvaried as the note of the cuckoo; and that he did not know whether it was more disagreeable for him to teach, or the boys to learn, the grammar rules." His general aversion to this painful drudgery was greatly enhanced by a disagreement between him and Sir Wolstan Dixie, the patron of the school, in whose house, I have been told, he officiated as a kind of domestic chaplain, so far, at least, as to say grace at table, but was treated, with what he represented as intolerable harshness; and,

after suffering for a few months such complicated misery, he relinquished a situation which all his life afterwards he recollected with the strongest aversion, and even a degree of horror. But it is probable that at this period, whatever uneasiness he may have endured, he laid the foundation of much future eminence by application to his studies.

In a man whom religious education has secured from licentious indulgences, the passion of love, when once it has seized him, is exceedingly strong; being unimpaired by dissipation and totally concentrated in one object. This was experienced by Johnson, when he became the fervent admirer of Mrs. Porter, after her first husband's death. Miss Porter told me, that when he was first introduced to her mother, his appearance was very forbidding: he was then lean and lank, so that his immense structure of bones was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars of the scrofula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair, which was straight and stiff, and separated behind: and he often had, seemingly, convulsive starts and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise and ridicule. Mrs. Porter was so much engaged by his conversation that she overlooked all these external disadvantages, and said to her daughter, "This is the most sensible man that I ever saw in my life."

Though Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson, and her person and manner, as described to me by the late Mr. Garrick, were by no means pleasing to others, she must have had a superiority of understanding and talents, as she certainly inspired him with more than ordinary passion; and she having signified her willingness to accept of his hand, he went to Lichfield to ask his mother's consent to the marriage; which he could not but be conscious was a very imprudent scheme, both on account of their disparity of years, and her want of fortune. But Mrs. Johnson knew too well the ardour of her son's temper, and was too tender a parent to oppose his inclinations.

I know not for what reason the marriage ceremony was not performed at Birmingham; but a resolution

was taken that it should be at Derby, for which place the bride and bridegroom set out on horseback, I suppose in very good humour. But though Mr. Topham Beauclerk used archly to mention Johnson's having told him, with much gravity, "Sir, it was a love marriage on both sides," I have had from my illustrious friend the following curious account of their journey to church upon the nuptial morn:—"Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, Sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me; and, when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice; and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly, till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I was sure she could not miss it; and I contrived that she should soon come up with me. When she did, I observed her to be in tears."

This, it must be allowed, was a singular beginning of connubial felicity; but there is no doubt, that Johnson, though he thus showed a manly firmness, proved a most affectionate and indulgent husband to the last moment of Mrs. Johnson's life; and in his *Prayers and Meditations* we find very remarkable evidence that his regard and fondness for her never ceased even after her death. He used to name her by the familiar appellation of *Tetty* or *Tetsey*, which, like *Betty* or *Betsy*, is provincially used as a contraction for *Elizabeth*, her Christian name, but which to us seems ludicrous, when applied to a woman of her age and appearance. Mr. Garrick described her to me as very fat, with swelled cheeks, of a florid red, produced by thick painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials; flaring and fantastic in her dress, and affected both in her speech and her general behaviour.

He now set up a private academy, for which purpose he hired a large house, well situated near his native city. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1736 there is



the following advertisement: "At Edial, near Lichfield, in Staffordshire, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by SAMUEL JOHNSON." But the only pupils that were put under his care were the celebrated David Garrick and his brother George, and a Mr. Offely, a young gentleman of good fortune, who died early. As yet, his name had nothing of that celebrity which afterwards commanded the highest attention and respect of mankind. The truth is, that he was not so well qualified for being a teacher of elements, and a conductor in learning by regular gradations, as men of inferior powers of mind. His own acquisitions had been made by fits and starts, by violent irruptions into the regions of knowledge; and it could not be expected that his impatience would be subdued, and his impetuosity restrained, so as to fit him for a quiet guide to novices.

Johnson was not more satisfied with his situation as the master of an academy, than with that of the usher of a school; we need not wonder, therefore, that he did not keep his academy above a year and a half.

### JOHNSON GOES TO LONDON, 1737

JOHNSON now thought of trying his fortune in London, the great field of genius and exertion, where talents of every kind have the fullest scope and the highest encouragement. It is a memorable circumstance, that his pupil, David Garrick, went thither at the same time, with intent to complete his education and follow the profession of the law, from which he was soon diverted by his decided preference for the stage.

How he employed himself upon his first coming to London is not particularly known.

He had a little money when he came to town, and he knew how he could live in the cheapest manner. His first lodgings were at the house of Mr. Norris, a staymaker, in Exeter Street, adjoining Catherine Street, in the Strand. "I dined," said he, "very well for eightpence, with very good company, at the Pine-

Apple in New Street, just by. Several of them had travelled. They expected to meet every day; but did not know one another's names. It used to cost the rest a shilling, for they drank wine; but I had a cut of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny; so that I was quite well served, nay, better than the rest, for they gave the waiter nothing."

He at this time, I believe, abstained entirely from fermented liquors: a practice to which he rigidly conformed for many years together, at different periods of his life.

His Ofellus, in the *Art of Living in London*, I have heard him relate, was an Irish painter, whom he knew at Birmingham, and who had practised his own precepts of economy for several years in the British capital. He assured Johnson, who, I suppose, was then meditating to try his fortune in London, but was apprehensive of the expense, "that thirty pounds a year was enough to enable a man to live there without being contemptible. He allowed ten pounds for clothes and linen. He said a man might live in a garret at eighteenpence a week; few people would inquire where he lodged; and if they did, it was easy to say, 'Sir, I am to be found at such a place.' By spending threepence in a coffee-house, he might be for some hours every day in very good company; he might dine for sixpence, breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. On *clean-shirt-day* he went abroad, and paid visits." I have heard him more than once talk of his frugal friend, whom he recollected with esteem and kindness, and did not like to have one smile at the recital. "This man," said he, gravely, "was a very sensible man, who perfectly understood common affairs: a man of a great deal of knowledge of the world, fresh from life, not strained through books."

Amidst this cold obscurity, there was one brilliant circumstance to cheer him; he was well acquainted with Mr. Henry Hervey, one of the branches of the noble family of that name, who had been quartered at

Lichfield as an officer of the army, and had at this time a house in London, where Johnson was frequently entertained, and had an opportunity of meeting genteel company. Not very long before his death, he mentioned this, among other particulars of his life, which he was kindly communicating to me; and he described this early friend "Harry Hervey," thus: "He was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog 'Hervey,' I shall love him."

In the course of the summer he returned to Lichfield, where he had left Mrs. Johnson, and there he at last finished his tragedy, which was not executed with his rapidity of composition upon other occasions, but was slowly and painfully elaborated. A few days before his death, while burning a great mass of papers, he picked out from among them the original unformed sketch of this tragedy, in his own handwriting, and gave it to Mr. Langton, by whose favour a copy of it is now in my possession. It contains fragments of the intended plot, and speeches for the different persons of the drama, partly in the raw materials of prose, partly worked up into verse; as also a variety of hints for illustration, borrowed from the Greek, Roman, and modern writers. The handwriting is very difficult to be read, even by those who were best acquainted with Johnson's mode of penmanship, which at all times was very particular. The King having graciously accepted of this manuscript as a literary curiosity, Mr. Langton made a fair and distinct copy of it, which he ordered to be bound up with the original and the printed tragedy; and the volume is deposited in the King's library. His Majesty was pleased to permit Mr. Langton to take a copy of it for himself.

Johnson's residence at Lichfield, on his return to it at this time, was only for three months; and as he had as yet seen but a small part of the wonders of the metropolis, he had little to tell his townsmen. He related to me the following minute anecdote of this period:—"In the last age, when my mother lived in London, there were two sets of people, those who gave the wall and those who took it; the peaceable and the

quarrelsome. When I returned to Lichfield, after having been in London, my mother asked me, whether I was one of those who gave the wall, or those who took it. Now it is fixed that every man keeps to the right; or, if one is taking the wall, another yields it; and it is never a dispute."

He now removed to London with Mrs. Johnson; but her daughter, who had lived with them at Edial, was left with her relations in the country. His lodgings were for some time in Woodstock Street, near Hanover Square, and afterwards in Castle Street, near Cavendish Square.

### "LONDON, A POEM IN IMITATION OF THE THIRD SATIRE OF JUVENAL"

[JOHNSON'S notice had been attracted by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, carried on by Mr. Edward Cave under the name of Sylvanus Urban. His first contribution to it was a copy of Latin verses, *Ad Urbanum*.]

But what first displayed his transcendent powers, and "gave the world assurance of the man," was his *London, a Poem, in imitation of the third Satire of Juvenal*; which came out in May this year, and burst forth with a splendour, the rays of which will for ever encircle his name. Boileau had imitated the same satire with great success, applying it to Paris; but an attentive comparison will satisfy every reader, that he is much excelled by the English Juvenal. Oldham had also imitated it, and applied it to London; all which performances concur to prove, that great cities, in every age, and in every country, will furnish similar topics of satire. Whether Johnson had previously read Oldham's imitation I do not know; but it is not a little remarkable, that there is scarcely any coincidence found between the two performances, though upon the very same subject.

Where or in what manner this poem was composed, I am sorry that I neglected to ascertain with precision from Johnson's own authority. He has marked upon



his corrected copy of the first edition of it, "Written in 1738;" and, as it was published in the month of May in that year, it is evident that much time was not employed in preparing it for the press.

TO MR. CAVE.

"Castle Street, Wednesday Morning.  
[March, 1738.]

"SIR,

"When I took the liberty of writing to you a few days ago, I did not expect a repetition of the same pleasure so soon; for a pleasure I shall always think it, to converse in any manner with an ingenious and candid man: but having the enclosed poem in my hands to dispose of for the benefit of the author (of whose abilities I shall say nothing, since I send you his performance), I believe I could not procure more advantageous terms from any person than from you, who have so much distinguished yourself by your generous encouragement of poetry; and whose judgement of that art nothing but your commendation of my trifle can give me any occasion to call in question. I do not doubt but you will look over this poem with another eye, and reward it in a different manner from a mercenary bookseller, who counts the lines he is to purchase, and considers nothing but the bulk. I cannot help taking notice, that, besides what the author may hope for on account of his abilities, he has likewise another claim to your regard, as he lies at present under very disadvantageous circumstances of fortune. I beg, therefore, that you will favour me with a letter to-morrow, that I may know what you can afford to allow him, that he may either part with it to you, or find out (which I do not expect) some other way more to his satisfaction.

"I have only to add, that as I am sensible I have transcribed it very coarsely, which, after having altered it, I was obliged to do, I will, if you please to transmit the sheets from the press, correct it for you; and take the trouble of altering any stroke of satire which you may dislike.

"By exerting on this occasion your usual generosity, you will not only encourage learning, and relieve distress, but (though it be in comparison of the other motives of very small account) oblige, in a very sensible manner, Sir, your very humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

To us who have long known the manly force, bold spirit, and masterly versification of this poem, it is a matter of curiosity to observe the diffidence with which its author brought it forward into public notice, while he is so cautious as not to avow it to be his own production; and with what humility he offers to allow the printer to "alter any stroke of satire which he might dislike." That any such alteration was made, we do not know. If we did, we could not but feel an indignant regret; but how painful is it to see that a writer of such vigorous powers of mind was actually in such distress, that the small profit which so short a poem, however excellent, could yield, was courted as a "relief!"

Johnson's *London* was published in May, 1738; and it is remarkable, that it came out on the same morning with Pope's satire, entitled *1738*; so that England had at once its Juvenal and Horace as poetical monitors. The Rev. Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, to whom I am indebted for some obliging communications, was then a student at Oxford, and remembers well the effect which *London* produced. Everybody was delighted with it; and there being no name to it, the first buzz of the literary circles was, "Here is an unknown poet, greater even than Pope." And it is recorded in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of that year that it "got to the second edition in the course of a week."

Pope, who then filled the poetical throne without a rival, it may reasonably be presumed, must have been particularly struck by the sudden appearance of such a poet; and to his credit let it be remembered, that his feelings and conduct on the occasion were candid and liberal. He requested Mr. Richardson, son of the

painter, to endeavour to find out who this new author was. Mr. Richardson, after some inquiry, having informed him that he had discovered only that his name was Johnson, and that he was some obscure man, Pope said, "He will soon be *déterré*."

Though thus elevated into fame, and conscious of uncommon powers, he had not that bustling confidence, or, I may rather say, that animated ambition, which one might have supposed would have urged him to endeavour at rising in life. But such was his inflexible dignity of character, that he could not stoop to court the great; without which, hardly any man has made his way to a high station. He could not expect to produce many such works as his *London*, and he felt the hardships of writing for bread; he was therefore willing to resume the office of a schoolmaster, so as to have a sure, though moderate, income for his life; and an offer being made to him of the mastership of a school, provided he could obtain the degree of Master of Arts, Dr. Adams was applied to, by a common friend, to know whether that could be granted him as a favour from the University of Oxford. But though he had made such a figure in the literary world, it was then thought too great a favour to be asked.

About this time he made one other effort to emancipate himself from the drudgery of authorship. He applied to Dr. Adams, to consult Dr. Smalbroke of the Commons, whether a person might be permitted to practise as an advocate there, without a doctor's degree in civil law. "I am," said he, "a total stranger to these studies; but whatever is a profession, and maintains numbers, must be within the reach of common abilities, and some degree of industry." Dr. Adams was much pleased with Johnson's design to employ his talents in that manner, being confident he would have attained to great eminence. And, indeed, I cannot conceive a man better qualified to make a distinguished figure as a lawyer; for he would have brought to his profession a rich store of various knowledge, an uncommon acuteness, and a command of language, in which few could have equalled, and none have sur-

passed him. He who could display eloquence and wit in defence of the decision of the House of Commons upon Mr. Wilkes's election for Middlesex, and of the unconstitutional taxation of our fellow-subjects in America, must have been a powerful advocate in any cause. But here, also, the want of a degree was an insurmountable bar.

He was, therefore, under the necessity of persevering in that course, into which he had been forced.

## ISSUE OF THE PLAN FOR A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

[BETWEEN 1738 and 1747 Johnson wrote regularly for the *Gentleman's Magazine*; his chief contributions were the *Parliamentary Debates*, under the name of *Debates in the Senate of Lilliput*, and a *Life of Richard Savage*.]

But the year 1747 is distinguished as the epoch when Johnson's arduous and important work, his *Dictionary of the English Language*, was announced to the world, by the publication of its *Plan* or *Prospectus*.

How long this immense undertaking had been the object of his contemplation, I do not know. I once asked him by what means he had attained to that astonishing knowledge of our language, by which he was enabled to realize a design of such extent and accumulated difficulty. He told me, that “it was not the effect of particular study; but that it had grown up in his mind insensibly.” I have been informed by Mr. James Dodsley, that several years before this period, when Johnson was one day sitting in his brother Robert's shop, he heard his brother suggest to him, that a *Dictionary of the English Language* would be a work that would be well received by the public; that Johnson seemed at first to catch at the proposition, but, after a pause, said, in his abrupt, decisive manner, “I believe I shall not undertake it.” That he, however, had bestowed much thought upon the subject, before he published his *Plan*, is evident from the enlarged, clear, and accurate views which it



exhibits; and we find him mentioning in that tract, that many of the writers whose testimonies were to be produced as authorities were selected by Pope; which proves that he had been furnished, probably by Mr. Robert Dodsley, with whatever hints that eminent poet had contributed towards a great literary project, that had been the subject of important consideration in a former reign.

The booksellers who contracted with Johnson, single and unaided, for the execution of a work, which in other countries has not been effected but by the co-operating exertions of many, were Mr. Robert Dodsley, Mr. Charles Hitch, Mr. Andrew Millar, the two Messrs. Longman, and the two Messrs. Knapton. The price stipulated was fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds.

The *Plan* was addressed to Philip Dormer, Earl of Chesterfield, then one of his Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State; a nobleman who was very ambitious of literary distinction, and who, upon being informed of the design, had expressed himself in terms very favourable to its success. There is, perhaps, in every thing of any consequence, a secret history which it would be amusing to know, could we have it authentically communicated. Johnson told me, "Sir, the way in which the plan of my *Dictionary* came to be inscribed to Lord Chesterfield, was this; I had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord Chesterfield. I laid hold of this as a pretext for delay, that it might be better done, and let Dodsley have his desire. I said to my friend, Dr. Bathurst, 'Now, if any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chesterfield, it will be ascribed to deep policy, when, in fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness.'"

That he was fully aware of the arduous nature of the undertaking he acknowledges; and shows himself perfectly sensible of it in the conclusion of his *Plan*; but he had a noble consciousness of his own abilities, which enabled him to go on with undaunted spirit.

Dr. Adams found him one day busy at his *Dictionary*,

when the following dialogue ensued. "ADAMS. This is a great work, Sir. How are you to get all the etymologies? JOHNSON. Why, Sir, here is a shelf with Junius, and Skinner, and others; and there is a Welsh gentleman who has published a collection of Welsh proverbs, who will help me with the Welsh. ADAMS. But, Sir, how can you do this in three years? JOHNSON. Sir, I have no doubt that I can do it in three years. ADAMS. But the French Academy, which consists of forty members, took forty years to compile their Dictionary. JOHNSON. Sir, thus it is. This is the proportion. Let me see; forty times forty is sixteen hundred. As three to sixteen hundred, so is the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman." With so much ease and pleasantry could he talk of that prodigious labour which he had undertaken to execute.

The public has had, from another pen, a long detail of what had been done in this country by prior Lexicographers; and no doubt Johnson was wise to avail himself of them, so far as they went: but the learned yet judicious research of etymology, the various yet accurate display of definition, and the rich collection of authorities, were reserved for the superior mind of our great philologist. For the mechanical part he employed, as he told me, six amanuenses; and let it be remembered by the natives of North Britain, to whom he is supposed to have been so hostile, that five of them were of that country.

While the *Dictionary* was going forward, Johnson lived part of the time in Holborn, part in Gough Square, Fleet Street; and he had an upper room fitted up like a counting-house for the purpose, in which he gave to the copyists their several tasks. The words partly taken from other dictionaries, and partly supplied by himself, having been first written down with spaces left between them, he delivered in writing their etymologies, definitions, and various significations. The authorities were copied from the books themselves, in which he had marked the passages with a black-lead pencil, the traces of which could easily be effaced. I have seen several of them, in which that trouble had

not been taken; so that they were just as when used by the copyists. It is remarkable, that he was so attentive in the choice of the passages in which words were authorized, that one may read page after page of his *Dictionary* with improvement and pleasure; and it should not pass unobserved, that he has quoted no author whose writings had a tendency to hurt sound religion and morality.

The necessary expense of preparing a work of such magnitude for the press, must have been a considerable deduction from the price stipulated to be paid for the copyright. I understand that nothing was allowed by the booksellers on that account; and I remember his telling me, that a large portion of it having, by mistake, been written upon both sides of the paper, so as to be inconvenient for the compositor, it cost him twenty pounds to have it transcribed upon one side only.

He is now to be considered as "tugging at his oar," as engaged in a steady continued course of occupation, sufficient to employ all his time for some years; and which was the best preventive of that constitutional melancholy which was ever lurking about him, ready to trouble his quiet. But his enlarged and lively mind could not be satisfied without more diversity of employment, and the pleasure of animated relaxation. He therefore not only exerted his talents in occasional composition, very different from Lexicography, but formed a club in Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, with a view to enjoy literary discussion, and amuse his evening hours.

In January, 1749, he published *The Vanity of Human Wishes, being the Tenth Satire of Juvenal imitated*. He, I believe, composed it the preceding year. Mrs. Johnson, for the sake of country air, had lodgings at Hampstead, to which he resorted occasionally, and there the greatest part, if not the whole, of this imitation was written. The fervid rapidity with which it was produced, is scarcely credible. I have heard him say, that he composed seventy lines of it in one day, without putting one of them upon paper till they

were finished. I remember when I once regretted to him that he had not given us more of Juvenal's *Satires*, he said he probably should give more, for he had them all in his head : by which I understood, that he had the originals and correspondent allusions floating in his mind, which he could, when he pleased, embody and render permanent without much labour.

The profits of a single poem, however excellent, appear to have been very small in the last reign, compared with what a publication of the same size has since been known to yield. I have mentioned, upon Johnson's own authority, that for his *London* he had only ten guineas ; and now, after his fame was established, he got for his *Vanity of Human Wishes* but five guineas more, as is proved by an authentic document in my possession.

It will be observed that he reserves to himself the right of printing one edition of this satire, which was his practice upon occasion of the sale of all his writings ; it being his fixed intention to publish at some period, for his own profit, a complete collection of his works.

### PRODUCTION OF "IRENE," 1749

GARRICK being now vested with theatrical power by being manager of Drury Lane Theatre, he kindly and generously made use of it to bring out Johnson's tragedy, which had been long kept back for want of encouragement. But in this benevolent purpose he met with no small difficulty from the temper of Johnson, which could not brook that a drama which he had formed with much study, and had been obliged to keep more than the nine years of *Horace*, should be revised and altered at the pleasure of an actor. Yet Garrick knew well, that without some alterations it would not be fit for the stage. A violent dispute having ensued between them, Garrick applied to the Reverend Dr. Taylor to interpose. Johnson was at first very obstinate. "Sir," said he, "the fellow wants me to make



Mahomet run mad, that he may have an opportunity of tossing his hands and kicking his heels." He was, however, at last, with difficulty, prevailed on to comply with Garrick's wishes, so as to allow of some changes; but still there were not enough.

Dr. Adams was present the first night of the representation of *Irene*, and gave me the following account:—"Before the curtain drew up, there were catcalls, whistling, which alarmed Johnson's friends. The Prologue, which was written by himself in a manly strain, soothed the audience, and the play went off tolerably, till it came to the conclusion, when Mrs. Pritchard, the heroine of the piece, was to be strangled upon the stage, and was to speak two lines with the bowstring round her neck. The audience cried out '*Murder! murder!*' She several times attempted to speak; but in vain. At last she was obliged to go off the stage alive." This passage was afterwards struck out, and she was carried off to be put to death behind the scenes, as the play now has it.

Notwithstanding all the support of such performers as Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, and every advantage of dress and decoration, the tragedy of *Irene* did not please the public. Mr. Garrick's zeal carried it through for nine nights, so that the author had his three nights' profit; and from a receipt signed by him, now in the hands of Mr. James Dodsley, it appears that his friend, Mr. Robert Dodsley, gave him one hundred pounds for the copy, with his usual reservation of the right of one edition.

When asked how he felt upon the ill success of his tragedy, he replied, "Like the Monument;" meaning that he continued firm and unmoved as a column. And let it be remembered, as an admonition to the *genus irritabile* of dramatic writers, that this great man, instead of peevishly complaining of the bad taste of the town, submitted to its decision without a murmur. He had, indeed, upon all occasions, a great deference for the general opinion: "A man," said he, "who writes a book, thinks himself wiser or wittier than the rest of mankind; he supposes that he can instruct or

amuse them, and the public to whom he appeals must, after all, be the judges of his pretensions."

On occasion of this play being brought upon the stage, Johnson had a fancy that, as a dramatic author, his dress should be more gay than what he ordinarily wore: he therefore appeared behind the scenes, and even in one of the side boxes, in a scarlet waistcoat, with rich gold lace, and a gold-laced hat. He humorously observed to Mr. Langton, "that when in that dress he could not treat people with the same ease as when in his usual plain clothes." Dress, indeed, we must allow, has more effect, even upon strong minds, than one should suppose, without having had the experience of it. His necessary attendance while his play was in rehearsal, and during its performance, brought him acquainted with many of the performers of both sexes, which produced a more favourable opinion of their profession, than he had harshly expressed in his *Life of Savage*. With some of them he kept up an acquaintance as long as he and they lived, and was ever ready to show them acts of kindness. He, for a considerable time, used to frequent the *Green Room*, and seemed to take delight in dissipating his gloom, by mixing in the sprightly chit-chat of the motley circle then to be found there.

### "THE RAMBLER"

THE first paper of the *Rambler* was published on Tuesday the 20th of March, 1750; and its author was enabled to continue it, without interruption, every Tuesday and Saturday, till Saturday the 17th of March, 1752, on which day it closed. This is a strong confirmation of the truth of a remark of his, that "a man may write at any time, if he will set himself doggedly to it;" for, notwithstanding his constitutional indolence, his depression of spirits, and his labour in carrying on his *Dictionary*, he answered the stated calls of the press twice a week from the stores of his mind during all that time.

Posterity will be astonished when they are told, upon the authority of Johnson himself, that many of these discourses, which we should suppose had been laboured with all the slow attention of literary leisure, were written in haste as the moment pressed, without even being read over by him before they were printed. It can be accounted for only in this way; that, by reading and meditation, and a very close inspection of life, he had accumulated a great fund of miscellaneous knowledge, which, by a peculiar promptitude of mind, was ever ready at his call, and which he had constantly accustomed himself to clothe in the most apt and energetic expression. Sir Joshua Reynolds once asked him, by what means he had attained this extraordinary accuracy and flow of language. He told him, that he had early laid it down as a fixed rule to do his best on every occasion, and in every company: to impart whatever he knew in the most forcible language he could put it in; and that by constant practice, and never suffering any careless expression to escape him, or attempting to deliver his thoughts without arranging them in the clearest manner, it became habitual to him.

As the *Rambler* was entirely the work of one man, there was, of course, such a uniformity in its texture, as very much to exclude the charm of variety; and the grave and often solemn cast of thinking, which distinguished it from other periodical papers, made it, for some time, not generally liked. So slowly did this excellent work, of which twelve editions have now issued from the press, gain upon the world at large, that even in the closing number the author says, "I have never been much a favourite of the public."

Yet, very soon after its commencement, there were who felt and acknowledged its uncommon excellence. Verses in its praise appeared in the newspapers; and the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* mentions, in October, his having received several letters to the same purpose from the learned. *The Student, or Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany*, in which Mr. Bonnell Thornton and Mr. Colman were the principal writers,

describes it as "a work that exceeds any thing of the kind ever published in this kingdom, some of the *Spectators* excepted,—if indeed they may be excepted." And afterwards, "May the public favours crown his merits, and may not the English, under the auspicious reign of George the Second, neglect a man, who, had he lived in the first century, would have been one of the greatest favourites of Augustus." This flattery of the monarch had no effect. It is too well known, that the second George never was an Augustus to learning or genius.

Johnson told me, with an amiable fondness, a little pleasing circumstance relative to this work. Mrs. Johnson, in whose judgement and taste he had great confidence, said to him, after a few numbers of the *Rambler* had come out, "I thought very well of you before; but I did not imagine you could have written any thing equal to this." Distant praise, from whatever quarter, is not so delightful as that of a wife whom a man loves and esteems. Her approbation may be said to "come home to his bosom;" and, being so near, its effect is most sensible and permanent.

The *Rambler* has increased in fame as in age. Soon after its first folio edition was concluded, it was published in six duodecimo volumes; and its author lived to see ten numerous editions of it in London, besides those of Ireland and Scotland.

## JOHNSON'S FRIENDSHIP WITH LANGTON AND BEAUCLERK

His acquaintance with Bennet Langton, Esq., of Langton, in Lincolnshire, another much valued friend, commenced soon after the conclusion of his *Rambler*; which that gentleman, then a youth, had read with so much admiration, that he came to London chiefly with a view of endeavouring to be introduced to its author. By a fortunate chance, he happened to take lodgings in a house where Mr. Levett frequently visited; and having mentioned his wish to his landlady, she intro-



duced him to Mr. Levett, who readily obtained Johnson's permission to bring Mr. Langton to him; as, indeed, Johnson, during the whole course of his life, had no shyness, real or affected, but was easy of access to all who were properly recommended, and even wished to see numbers at his *levée*, as his morning circle of company might, with strict propriety, be called. Mr. Langton was exceedingly surprised when the Sage first appeared. He had not received the smallest intimation of his figure, dress, or manner. From perusing his writings, he fancied he should see a decent, well-dressed, in short, a remarkably decorous philosopher. Instead of which, down from his bed-chamber about noon, came, as newly risen, a huge uncouth figure, with a little dark wig which scarcely covered his head, and his clothes hanging loose about him. But his conversation was so rich, so animated, and so forcible, and his religious and political notions so congenial with those in which Langton had been educated, that he conceived for him that veneration and attachment which he ever preserved. Johnson was not the less ready to love Mr. Langton, for his being of a very ancient family; for I have heard him say with pleasure, "Langton, Sir, has a grant of free-warren from Henry the Second; and Cardinal Stephen Langton, in King John's reign, was of his family."

Mr. Langton afterwards went to pursue his studies at Trinity College, Oxford, where he formed an acquaintance with his fellow-student, Mr. Topham Beauclerk, who, though their opinions and modes of life were so different, that it seemed utterly improbable that they should at all agree, had so ardent a love of literature, so acute an understanding, such elegance of manners, and so well discerned the excellent qualities of Mr. Langton, a gentleman eminent not only for worth and learning, but for an inexhaustible fund of entertaining conversation, that they became intimate friends.

Johnson, soon after this acquaintance began, passed a considerable time at Oxford. He at first thought it strange that Langton should associate so much with

one who had the character of being loose, both in his principles and practice; but, by degrees, he himself was fascinated. Mr. Beauclerk's being of the St. Alban's family, and having, in some particulars, a resemblance to Charles the Second, contributed, in Johnson's imagination, to throw a lustre upon his other qualities; and, in a short time, the moral, pious Johnson, and the gay, dissipated Beauclerk, were companions. "What a coalition!" (said Garrick, when he heard of this :) "I shall have my old friend to bail out of the Round-house." But I can bear testimony that it was a very agreeable association. Beauclerk was too polite, and valued learning and wit too much, to offend Johnson by sallies of infidelity or licentiousness; and Johnson delighted in the good qualities of Beauclerk, and hoped to correct the evil. Innumerable were the scenes in which Johnson was amused by these young men. Beauclerk could take more liberty with him than anybody with whom I ever saw him; but, on the other hand, Beauclerk was not spared by his respectable companion, when reproof was proper. Beauclerk had such a propensity to satire, that at one time Johnson said to him, "You never open your mouth but with intention to give pain; and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention." At another time applying to him, with a slight alteration, a line of Pope, he said,

"Thy love of folly, and thy scorn of fools—

Everything thou dost shows the one, and everything thou say'st, the other." At another time he said to him, "Thy body is all vice, and thy mind all virtue." Beauclerk not seeming to relish the compliment, Johnson said, "Nay, Sir, Alexander the Great, marching in triumph into Babylon, could not have desired to have had more said to him."

One night when Beauclerk and Langton had supped at a tavern in London, and sat till about three in the morning, it came into their heads to go and knock up Johnson, and see if they could prevail on him to join them in a ramble. They rapped violently at the door

of his chambers in the Temple, till at last he appeared in his shirt, with his little black wig on the top of his head, instead of a nightcap, and a poker in his hand, imagining, probably, that some ruffians were coming to attack him. When he discovered who they were, and was told their errand, he smiled, and with great good-humour agreed to their proposal: "What is it you, you dogs! I'll have a frisk with you." He was soon dressed, and they sallied forth together into Covent Garden, where the green-grocers and fruiterers were beginning to arrange their hampers, just come in from the country. Johnson made some attempts to help them; but the honest gardeners stared so at his figure and manner, and odd interference, that he soon saw his services were not relished. They then repaired to one of the neighbouring taverns, and made a bowl of that liquor called *Bishop*, which Johnson had always liked: while, in joyous contempt of sleep, from which he had been roused, he repeated the festive lines,

"Short, O short then be thy reign,  
And give us to the world again!"

They did not stay long, but walked down to the Thames, took a boat, and rowed to Billingsgate. Beauclerk and Johnson were so well pleased with their amusement, that they resolved to persevere in dissipation for the rest of the day: but Langton deserted them, being engaged to breakfast with some young ladies. Johnson scolded him for "leaving his social friends, to go and sit with a set of wretched *un-idea'd* girls." Garrick, being told of this ramble, said to him smartly, "I heard of your frolic t'other night. You'll be in the *Chronicle*." Upon which Johnson afterwards observed, "*He* durst not do such a thing. His *wife* would not *let* him!"

## "A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE"

LORD CHESTERFIELD, to whom Johnson had paid the high compliment of addressing to his lordship the *Plan* of his *Dictionary*, had behaved to him in such a

manner as to excite his contempt and indignation. The world has been for many years amused with a story confidently told, and as confidently repeated with additional circumstances, that a sudden disgust was taken by Johnson upon occasion of his having been one day kept long in waiting in his lordship's ante-chamber, for which the reason assigned was, that he had company with him; and that at last, when the door opened, out walked Colley Cibber; and that Johnson was so violently provoked when he found for whom he had been so long excluded, that he went away in a passion, and never would return. I remember having mentioned this story to George Lord Lyttelton, who told me he was very intimate with Lord Chesterfield; and, holding it as a well-known truth, defended Lord Chesterfield by saying, that "Cibber, who had been introduced familiarly by the backstairs, had probably not been there above ten minutes." It may seem strange even to entertain a doubt concerning a story so long and so widely current, and thus implicitly adopted, if not sanctioned, by the authority which I have mentioned; but Johnson himself assured me, that there was not the least foundation for it. He told me, that there never was any particular incident which produced a quarrel between Lord Chesterfield and him; but that his lordship's continued neglect was the reason why he resolved to have no connection with him.

When the *Dictionary* was upon the eve of publication, Lord Chesterfield, who, it is said, had flattered himself with expectations that Johnson would dedicate the work to him, attempted, in a courtly manner, to soothe and insinuate himself with the Sage, conscious, as it should seem, of the cold indifference with which he had treated its learned author; and further attempted to conciliate him, by writing two papers in *The World*, in recommendation of the work: and it must be confessed, that they contain some studied compliments, so finely turned, that if there had been no previous offence, it is probable that Johnson would have been highly delighted. Praise, in general, was



pleasing to him; but by praise from a man of rank and elegant accomplishments, he was peculiarly gratified.

This courtly device failed of its effect. Johnson, who thought that "all was false and hollow," despised the honied words, and was even indignant that Lord Chesterfield should, for a moment, imagine that he could be the dupe of such an artifice. His expression to me concerning Lord Chesterfield, upon this occasion, was, "Sir, after making great professions, he had, for many years, taken no notice of me; but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a scribbling in *The World* about it. Upon which, I wrote him a letter expressed in civil terms, but such as might show him that I did not mind what he said or wrote, and that I had done with him."

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF  
CHESTERFIELD.

"February 7, 1755.

"MY LORD,

"I have been lately informed by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your Lordship. To be so distinguished, is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

"When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your Lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*;—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your Lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

"Seven years, my Lord, have now past, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your

door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

“The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

“Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

“Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long awakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation, my Lord, your Lordship’s most humble, most obedient servant,

“SAM. JOHNSON.”

Mr. Andrew Millar, bookseller in the Strand, took the principal charge of conducting the publication of Johnson’s Dictionary; and as the patience of the proprietors was repeatedly tried and almost exhausted, by their expecting that the work would be completed within the time which Johnson had sanguinely supposed, the learned author was often goaded to dispatch, more especially as he had received all the copy-money, by different drafts, a considerable time before he had finished his task. When the messenger who carried the last sheet to Millar returned, Johnson asked him, “Well, what did he say?”—“Sir (answered the mes-

senger) he said, 'Thank God, I have done with him.' " "I am glad (replied Johnson with a smile) that he thanks God for any thing." It is remarkable, that those with whom Johnson chiefly contracted for his literary labours were Scotchmen, Mr. Millar and Mr. Strahan. Millar, though himself no great judge of literature, had good sense enough to have for his friends very able men to give him their opinion and advice in the purchase of copyright; the consequence of which was his acquiring a very large fortune, with great liberality. Johnson said of him, "I respect Millar, Sir; he has raised the price of literature."

The *Dictionary*, with a *Grammar and History of the English Language*, being now at length published, in two volumes folio, the world contemplated with wonder so stupendous a work achieved by one man, while other countries had thought such undertakings fit only for whole academies. Vast as his powers were, I cannot but think that his imagination deceived him, when he supposed that by constant application he might have performed the task in three years. Let the *Preface* be attentively perused, in which is given, in a clear, strong, and glowing style, a comprehensive, yet particular view of what he had done: and it will be evident that the time he employed upon it was comparatively short. I am unwilling to swell my book with long quotations from what is in everybody's hands, and I believe there are few prose compositions in the English languages that are read with more delight, or are more impressed upon the memory, than that preliminary discourse. One of its excellencies has always struck me with peculiar admiration; I mean the perspicuity with which he has expressed abstract scientific notions. As an instance of this, I shall quote the following sentence: "When the radical idea branches out into parallel ramifications, how can a consecutive series be formed of senses in their own nature collateral?" We have here an example of what has been often said, and I believe with justice, that there is for every thought a certain nice adaptation of words which none other could equal, and which when a man has been so

fortunate as to hit, he has attained, in that particular case, the perfection of language.

The extensive reading which was absolutely necessary for the accumulation of authorities, and which alone may account for Johnson's retentive mind being enriched with a very large and various store of knowledge and imagery, must have occupied several years. The *Preface* furnishes an eminent instance of a double talent, of which Johnson was fully conscious. Sir Joshua Reynolds heard him say, "There are two things which I am confident I can do very well: one is an introduction to any literary work, stating what it is to contain, and how it should be executed in the most perfect manner; the other is a conclusion, showing from various causes why the execution has not been equal to what the author promised to himself and to the public."

How should puny scribblers be abashed and disappointed, when they find him displaying a perfect theory of lexicographical excellence, yet at the same time candidly and modestly allowing that he "had not satisfied his own expectations." Here was a fair occasion for the exercise of Johnson's modesty, when he was called upon to compare his own arduous performance, not with those of other individuals, (in which case his inflexible regard to truth would have been violated had he affected diffidence,) but with speculative perfection; as he, who can outstrip all his competitors in the race, may yet be sensible of his deficiency when he runs against time. Well might he say, that "the *English Dictionary* was written with little assistance of the learned;" for he told me, that the only aid which he received was a paper containing twenty etymologies, sent to him by a person then unknown, who he was afterwards informed was Dr. Pearce, Bishop of Rochester. The etymologies, though they exhibit learning and judgment, are not, I think, entitled to the first praise amongst the various parts of this immense work. The definitions have always appeared to me such astonishing proofs of acuteness of intellect and precision of language, as indicate a genius of the highest rank.



This it is which marks the superior excellence of Johnson's *Dictionary* over others equally or even more voluminous, and must have made it a work of much greater mental labour than mere Lexicons, or *Word-Books*, as the Dutch call them. They, who will make the experiment of trying how they can define a few words of whatever nature, will soon be satisfied of the unquestionable justice of this observation, which I can assure my readers is founded upon much study, and upon communication with more minds than my own.

A few of his definitions must be admitted to be erroneous. Thus, *Windward* and *Leeward*, though directly of opposite meaning, are defined identically the same way; as to which inconsiderable specks it is enough to observe, that his Preface announces that he was aware that there might be many such in so immense a work; nor was he at all disconcerted when an instance was pointed out to him. A lady once asked him how he came to define *Pastern* the *knee* of a horse: instead of making an elaborate defence, as she expected, he at once answered, "Ignorance, Madam, pure ignorance." His definition of *Network* has been often quoted with sportive malignity, as obscuring a thing in itself very plain. But to these frivolous censures no other answer is necessary than that with which we are furnished by his own *Preface*:

"To explain, requires the use of terms less abstruse than that which is to be explained, and such terms cannot always be found. For, as nothing can be proved but by supposing something intuitively known, and evident without proof, so nothing can be defined but by the use of words too plain to admit of definition. Sometimes easy words are changed into harder, as, *burial*, into *sepulture* or *interment*; *dry*, into *desiccative*; *dryness*, into *siccity*, or *aridity*; *fit*, into *paroxysm*; for the *easiest* word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy."

His introducing his own opinions, and even prejudices, under general definitions of words, while at the same time the original meaning of the words is not explained, as his *Tory*, *Whig*, *Pension*, *Oats*, *Excise*,

and a few more, cannot be fully defended, and must be placed to the account of capricious and humorous indulgence. Talking to me upon this subject when we were at Ashbourne in 1777, he mentioned a still stronger instance of the predominance of his private feelings in the composition of this work, than any now to be found in it. "You know, Sir, Lord Gower forsook the old Jacobite interest. When I came to the word *Renegado*, after telling that it meant 'one who deserts to the enemy, a revolter,' I added, *Sometimes we say a GOWER*. Thus it went to the press: but the printer had more wit than I, and struck it out."

Let it, however, be remembered, that this indulgence does not display itself only in sarcasm towards others, but sometimes in playful allusion to the notions commonly entertained of his own laborious task. Thus: "*Grub Street*, the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, *dictionaries*, and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called *Grub Street*."—" *Lexicographer*, a writer of dictionaries, a *harmless drudge*."

At the time when he was concluding his very eloquent *Preface*, Johnson's mind appears to have been in such a state of depression, that we cannot contemplate without wonder the vigorous and splendid thoughts which so highly distinguish that performance.

"I (says he) may surely be contented without the praise of perfection, which if I could obtain in this gloom of solitude, what would it avail me? I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave; and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquillity, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise."

It must undoubtedly seem strange, that the conclusion of his *Preface* should be expressed in terms so desponding, when it is considered that the author was then only in his forty-sixth year. But we must ascribe its gloom to that miserable dejection of spirits to which he was constitutionally subject, and which was aggravated by the death of his wife two years before. I

have heard it ingeniously observed by a lady of rank and elegance, that "his melancholy was then at its meridian." It pleased God to grant him almost thirty years of life after this time; and once, when he was in a placid frame of mind, he was obliged to own to me that he had enjoyed happier days, and had many more friends, since that gloomy hour, than before.

It is a sad saying, that "most of those whom he wished to please had sunk into the grave;" and his case at forty-five was singularly unhappy, unless the circle of his friends was very narrow. I have often thought, that as longevity is generally desired, and I believe, generally expected, it would be wise to be continually adding to the number of our friends, that the loss of some may be supplied by others. Friendship, "the wine of life," should, like a well-stocked cellar, be thus continually renewed; and it is consolatory to think, that although we can seldom add what will equal the generous *first-growths* of our youth, yet friendship becomes insensibly old in much less time than is commonly imagined, and not many years are required to make it very mellow and pleasant. *Warmth* will, no doubt, make a considerable difference. Men of affectionate temper and bright fancy will coalesce a great deal sooner than those who are cold and dull.

The proposition which I have now endeavoured to illustrate was, at a subsequent period of his life, the opinion of Johnson himself. He said to Sir Joshua Reynolds, "If a man does not make new acquaintance as he advances through life, he will soon find himself left alone. A man, Sir, should keep his friendship in *constant repair*."

## BOSWELL MEETS JOHNSON

[In April, 1758, Johnson began *The Idler*, which came out every Saturday in a weekly newspaper called *The Universal Chronicle or Weekly Gazette*. These essays continued till April, 1760. In 1759 he lost his

mother, who died at the age of ninety; and shortly after this event he published *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*. In 1762 a pension of three hundred pounds was bestowed upon him, and in 1763 he became acquainted with Boswell.]

This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then called; and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson,—an honour of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, "Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead."

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Public Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of



seeing the Sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine." Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him, not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753. And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Mr. Thomas Davies the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him; but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

At last, on Monday, the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlour, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him, through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us, he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my lord, it comes!" I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon

after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," said he, with a stern look, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardour been uncommonly strong, and my resolution

uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me for ever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited.

I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigour of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly : so that I was satisfied that though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy, I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So upon Tuesday the 24th of May I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner Temple Lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Rev. Dr. Blair of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to me not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den;" an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself.

He received me very courteously; but it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty; he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen,

whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go."—"Sir," said I, "I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me."

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favour me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add, that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

## DR. OLIVER GOLDSMITH

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavour to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke, at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone, that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an *Ode* of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physic at Edinburgh, and upon the continent; and, I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding at Universities



to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when, luckily for him, his challenge was not accepted; so that, as I once observed to Dr. Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that one Dr. Goldsmith was the author of *An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* and of *The Citizen of the World*, a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage, as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. "*Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.*" His mind resembled a fertile, but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation; but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*; and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who

were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies with their mother on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once, at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinized; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice he said he had a brother who was Dean of Durham; a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield*. But Johnson informed me, that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, Sir," said he, "a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after the *Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

Mrs. Piozzi and Sir John Hawkins have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:—

"I received one morning a message from poor Gold-

smith that he was in great distress, and, as it was no in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return; and, having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

### JOHNSON'S PECULIARITIES

It was his custom to observe certain days with a pious abstraction: viz., New Year's Day, the day of his wife's death, Good Friday, Easter Day, and his own birthday. He this year [1764] says,

"I have now spent fifty-five years in resolving; having, from the earliest time almost that I can remember, been forming schemes of a better life. I have done nothing. The need of doing, therefore, is pressing, since the time of doing is short. O God, grant me to resolve aright, and to keep my resolutions, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

Such a tenderness of conscience, such a fervent desire of improvement, will rarely be found. It is, surely, not decent in those who are hardened in indifference to spiritual improvement, to treat this pious anxiety of Johnson with contempt.

About this time he was afflicted with a very severe return of the hypochondriac disorder, which was ever lurking about him. He was so ill, as, notwithstanding

his remarkable love of company, to be entirely averse to society, the most fatal symptom of that malady. Dr. Adams told me, that, as an old friend, he was admitted to visit him, and that he found him in a deplorable state, sighing, groaning, talking to himself, and restlessly walking from room to room. He then used this emphatical expression of the misery which he felt: "I would consent to have a limb amputated to recover my spirits."

Talking to himself was, indeed, one of his singularities ever since I knew him. I was certain that he was frequently uttering pious ejaculations; for fragments of the Lord's Prayer have been distinctly overheard.

He had another particularity, of which none of his friends ever ventured to ask an explanation. It appeared to me some superstitious habit, which he had contracted early, and from which he had never called upon his reason to disentangle him. This was his anxious care to go out or in at a door or passage, by a certain number of steps from a certain point, or at least so as that either his right or his left foot (I am not certain which) should constantly make the first actual movement when he came close to the door or passage. Thus I conjecture: for I have, upon innumerable occasions, observed him suddenly stop, and then seem to count his steps with a deep earnestness; and when he had neglected or gone wrong in this sort of magical movement, I have seen him go back again, put himself in a proper posture to begin the ceremony, and, having gone through it, break from his abstraction, walk briskly on, and join his companion. A strange instance of something of this nature, even when on horseback, happened when he was in the Isle of Sky. Sir Joshua Reynolds has observed him to go a good way about, rather than cross a particular alley in Leicester Fields; but this Sir Joshua imputed to his having had some disagreeable recollection associated with it.

That the most minute singularities which belonged to him, and made very observable parts of his appear-



ance and manner, may not be omitted, it is requisite to mention, that, while talking, or even musing as he sat in his chair, he commonly held his head to one side towards his right shoulder, and shook it in a tremulous manner, moving his body backwards and forwards, and rubbing his left knee in the same direction, with the palm of his hand. In the intervals of articulating he made various sounds with his mouth, sometimes as if ruminating, or what is called chewing the cud, sometimes giving a half-whistle, sometimes making his tongue play backwards from the roof of his mouth, as if clucking like a hen, and sometimes protruding it against his upper gums in front, as if pronouncing quickly, under his breath, *too, too, too*: all this accompanied sometimes with a thoughtful look, but more frequently with a smile. Generally, when he had concluded a period, in the course of a dispute, by which time he was a good deal exhausted by violence and vociferation, he used to blow out his breath like a whale. This, I suppose, was a relief to his lungs; and seemed in him to be a contemptuous mode of expression, as if he had made the arguments of his opponent fly like chaff before the wind.

I am fully aware how very obvious an occasion I here give for the sneering jocularities of such as have no relish of an exact likeness; which to render complete, he who draws it must not disdain the slightest strokes. But if witlings should be inclined to attack this account, let them have the candour to quote what I have offered in my defence.

### JOHNSON AND KING GEORGE III

[In 1764 the Literary Club was founded; Reynolds, Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, Langton and Goldsmith were original members, Boswell being admitted ten years later; they met at the Turk's Head in Soho one evening every week at seven. In 1765 Dublin University conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws upon Johnson, and the same year he was introduced into

the family of Mr. Thrale, a wealthy brewer. In this year also was published his edition of Shakspeare, with notes, in eight volumes.]

In February, 1767, there happened one of the most remarkable incidents of Johnson's life, which gratified his monarchical enthusiasm, and which he loved to relate with all its circumstances, when requested by his friends. This was his being honoured by a private conversation with his Majesty, in the library at the Queen's house. He had frequently visited those splendid rooms, and noble collection of books, which he used to say was more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have made in the time which the King had employed. Mr. Barnard, the librarian, took care that he should have every accommodation that could contribute to his ease and convenience, while indulging his literary taste in that place; so that he had here a very agreeable resource at leisure hours.

His Majesty having been informed of his occasional visits, was pleased to signify a desire that he should be told when Dr. Johnson came next to the library. Accordingly, the next time that Johnson did come, as soon as he was fairly engaged with a book, on which, while he sat by the fire, he seemed quite intent, Mr. Barnard stole round to the apartment where the King was, and in obedience to his Majesty's commands, mentioned that Dr. Johnson was then in the library. His Majesty said he was at leisure, and would go to him; upon which Mr. Barnard took one of the candles that stood upon the King's table, and lighted his Majesty through a suite of rooms, till they came to a private door into the library, of which his Majesty had the key. Being entered, Mr. Barnard stepped forward hastily to Dr. Johnson, who was still in a profound study, and whispered him, "Sir, here is the King." Johnson started up, and stood still. His Majesty approached him, and at once was courteously easy.

His Majesty began by observing, that he understood he came sometimes to the library; and then mentioning his having heard that the Doctor had been lately at Oxford, asked him if he was not fond of going thither.

To which Johnson answered, that he was indeed fond of going to Oxford sometimes, but was likewise glad to come back again. The King then asked him what they were doing at Oxford. Johnson answered, he could not much commend their diligence, but that in some respects they were mended, for they had put their press under better regulations, and were at that time printing Polybius. He was then asked whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered, he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, "I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do." Being asked whether All Souls or Christ Church Library was the largest, he answered, "All Souls library is the largest we have, except the Bodleian." "Ay," said the King, "that is the public library."

His Majesty inquired if he was then writing any thing. He answered, he was not, for he had pretty well told the world what he knew, and must now read to acquire more knowledge. The King, as it should seem with a view to urge him to rely on his own stores as an original writer, and to continue his labours, then said, "I do not think you borrow much from any body." Johnson said, he thought he had already done his part as a writer. "I should have thought so too," said the King, "if you had not written so well." Johnson observed to me, upon this, that "No man could have paid a handsomer compliment; and it was fit for a King to pay. It was decisive." When asked by another friend, at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, whether he made any reply to this high compliment, he answered, "No, Sir. When the King had said it, it was to be so. It was not for me to bandy civilities with my Sovereign." Perhaps no man who had spent his whole life in courts could have shown a more nice and dignified sense of true politeness, than Johnson did in this instance.

His Majesty having observed to him that he supposed he must have read a good deal; Johnson answered, that he thought more than he read; that he had read a great deal in the early part of his life, but having

fallen into ill health, he had not been able to read much, compared with others : for instance, he said he had not read much, compared with Dr. Warburton. Upon which the King said, that he heard Dr. Warburton was a man of such general knowledge, that you could scarce talk with him on any subject on which he was not qualified to speak ; and that his learning resembled Garrick's acting, in its universality. His Majesty then talked of the controversy between Warburton and Lowth, which he seemed to have read, and asked Johnson what he thought of it. Johnson answered, " Warburton has most general, most scholastic learning ; Lowth is the more correct scholar. I do not know which of them calls names best." The King was pleased to say he was of the same opinion, adding, " You do not think then, Dr. Johnson, that there was much argument in the case." Johnson said, he did not think there was. " Why, truly," said the King, " when once it comes to calling names, argument is pretty well at an end."

His Majesty then asked him what he thought of Lord Lyttelton's *History*, which was then just published. Johnson said, he thought his style pretty good, but that he had blamed Henry the Second rather too much. " Why," said the King, " they seldom do these things by halves."—" No, Sir," answered Johnson, " not to Kings." But fearing to be misunderstood, he proceeded to explain himself ; and immediately subjoined, " That for those who spoke worse of Kings than they deserved, he could find no excuse ; but that he could more easily conceive how some might speak better of them than they deserved, without any ill intention : for, as Kings had much in their power to give, those who were favoured by them would frequently, from gratitude, exaggerate their praises : and as this proceeded from a good motive, it was certainly excusable, as far as error could be excusable."

The King then asked him what he thought of Dr. Hill. Johnson answered, that he was an ingenious man, but had no veracity ; and immediately mentioned, as an instance of it, an assertion of that writer, that he



had seen objects magnified to a much greater degree by using three or four microscopes at a time than by using one. "Now," added Johnson, "every one acquainted with microscopes knows, that the more of them he looks through, the less the object will appear."—"Why," replied the King, "this is not only telling an untruth, but telling it clumsily; for, if that be the case, every one who can look through a microscope will be able to detect him."

"I now," said Johnson to his friends, when relating what had passed, "began to consider that I was depreciating this man in the estimation of his Sovereign, and thought it was time for me to say something that might be more favourable." He added, therefore, that Dr. Hill was, notwithstanding, a very curious observer; and if he would have been contented to tell the world no more than he knew, he might have been a very considerable man, and needed not to have recourse to such mean expedients to raise his reputation.

The King then talked of literary journals, mentioned particularly the *Journal des Savans*, and asked Johnson if it was well done. Johnson said it was formerly very well done, and gave some account of the persons who began it, and carried it on for some years: enlarging, at the same time, on the nature and use of such works. The King asked if it was well done now. Johnson answered, he had no reason to think that it was. The King then asked him if there were any other literary journals published in this kingdom, except the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*; and on being answered there was no other, his Majesty asked which of them was the best: Johnson answered, that the *Monthly Review* was done with most care, the *Critical* upon the best principles; adding, that the authors of the *Monthly Review* were enemies to the Church. This the King said he was sorry to hear.

The conversation next turned on the *Philosophical Transactions*, when Johnson observed that they had now a better method of arranging their materials than formerly. "Ay," said the King, "they are obliged to Dr. Johnson for that!" for his Majesty had heard and

remembered the circumstance, which Johnson himself had forgot.

His Majesty expressed a desire to have the literary biography of this country ably executed, and proposed to Dr. Johnson to undertake it. Johnson signified his readiness to comply with his Majesty's wishes.

During the whole of this interview, Johnson talked to his Majesty with profound respect, but still in his firm manly manner, with a sonorous voice, and never in that subdued tone which is commonly used at the levée and in the drawing-room. After the King withdrew, Johnson showed himself highly pleased with his Majesty's conversation, and gracious behaviour. He said to Mr. Barnard, "Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen." And he afterwards observed to Mr. Langton, "Sir, his manners are those of as fine a gentleman as we may suppose Louis the Fourteenth or Charles the Second."

At Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where a circle of Johnson's friends was collected round him to hear his account of this memorable conversation, Dr. Joseph Warton, in his frank and lively manner, was very active in pressing him to mention the particulars. "Come now, Sir, this is an interesting matter; do favour us with it." Johnson, with great good-humour, complied.

He told them, "I found his Majesty wished I should talk, and I made it my business to talk. I find it does a man good to be talked to by his Sovereign. In the first place, a man cannot be in a passion——." Here some question interrupted him, which is to be regretted, as he certainly would have pointed out and illustrated many circumstances of advantage, from being in a situation where the powers of the mind are at once excited to vigorous exertion, and tempered by reverential awe.

## A DINNER AT BOSWELL'S LODGINGS

HE honoured me with his company at dinner on the 16th of October [1769], at my lodgings in Old Bond Street,

with Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Garrick, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Bickerstaff, and Mr. Thomas Davies. Garrick played round him with a fond vivacity, taking hold of the breasts of his coat, and, looking up in his face with a lively archness, complimented him on the good health he seemed to enjoy; while the Sage, shaking his head beheld him with a gentle complacency. One of the company not being come at the appointed hour, I proposed, as usual, upon such occasions, to order dinner to be served; adding, "Ought six people to be kept waiting for one?" "Why, yes," answered Johnson, with a delicate humanity, "if the one will suffer more by your sitting down, than the six will do by waiting." Goldsmith, to divert the tedious minutes, strutted about, bragging of his dress, and I believe was seriously vain of it, for his mind was wonderfully prone to such impressions. "Come, come," said Garrick, "talk no more of that. You are, perhaps, the worst—eh, eh!"—Goldsmith was eagerly attempting to interrupt him, when Garrick went on, laughing ironically, "Nay, you will always *look* like a gentleman; but I am talking of being well or *ill dressed*." "Well, let me tell you," said Goldsmith, "when my tailor brought home my bloom-coloured coat, he said, 'Sir, I have a favour to beg of you. When any body asks you who made your clothes, be pleased to mention John Filby, at the Harrow, in Water Lane.'" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crowds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat, even of so absurd a colour."

After dinner our conversation first turned upon Pope Johnson said, his characters of men were admirably drawn, those of women not so well. He repeated to us, in his forcible, melodious manner, the concluding lines of the *Dunciad*. While he was talking loudly in praise of those lines, one of the company ventured to say, "Too fine for such a poem:—a poem on what?" JOHNSON (with a disdainful look), "Why, on *dunces*. It was worth while being a dunce then. Ah, Sir, hadst *thou* lived in those days! It is not worth while being

a dunce now, when there are no wits." Bickerstaff observed, as a peculiar circumstance, that Pope's fame was higher when he was alive than it was then. Johnson said, his *Pastorals* were poor things, though the versification was fine. He told us, with high satisfaction, the anecdote of Pope's inquiring who was the author of his *London*, and saying, he will soon be *déterré*. He observed, that in Dryden's poetry there were passages drawn from a profundity which Pope could never reach. He repeated some fine lines on love, by the former, which I have now forgotten, and gave great applause to the character of Zimri. Goldsmith said, that Pope's character of Addison showed a deep knowledge of the human heart. Johnson said, that the description of the temple, in *The Mourning Bride*, was the finest poetical passage he had ever read; he recollected none in Shakspeare equal to it.—"But," said Garrick, all alarmed for "the god of his idolatry," "we know not the extent and variety of his powers. We are to suppose there are such passages in his works. Shakspeare must not suffer from the badness of our memories." Johnson, diverted by this enthusiastic jealousy, went on with great ardour: "No, Sir; Congreve has *nature*" (smiling on the tragic eagerness of Garrick); but composing himself, he added, "Sir, this is not comparing Congreve on the whole with Shakspeare on the whole; but only maintaining that Congreve has one finer passage than any that can be found in Shakspeare. Sir, a man may have no more than ten guineas in the world, but he may have those ten guineas in one piece; and so may have a finer piece than a man who has ten thousand pounds: but then he has only one ten-guinea piece.—What I mean is, that you can show me no passage where there is simply a description of material objects, without any intermixture of moral notions, which produces such an effect." Mr. Murphy mentioned Shakspeare's description of the night before the battle of Agincourt; but it was observed it had *men* in it. Mr. Davies suggested the speech of Juliet, in which she figures herself awaking in the tomb of her ancestors. Some one



mentioned the description of Dover Cliff. JOHNSON "No, Sir; it should be all precipice,—all vacuum. The crows impede your fall. The diminished appearance of the boats, and other circumstances, are all very good description; but do not impress the mind at once with the horrible idea of immense height. The impression is divided; you pass on by computation from one stage of the tremendous space to another. Had the girl in *The Mourning Bride* said she could not cast her shoe to the top of one of the pillars in the temple, it would not have aided the idea, but weakened it."

Talking of a barrister who had a bad utterance, some one (to rouse Johnson) wickedly said, that he was unfortunate in not having been taught oratory by Sheridan. JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, if he had been taught by Sheridan, he would have cleared the room." GARRICK. "Sheridan has too much vanity to be a good man."—We shall now see Johnson's mode of *defending* a man; taking him into his own hands, and discriminating. JOHNSON. "No, Sir. There is, to be sure, in Sheridan something to reprehend and every thing to laugh at; but, Sir, he is not a bad man. No, Sir; were mankind to be divided into good and bad, he would stand considerably within the ranks of good. And, Sir, it must be allowed that Sheridan excels in plain declamation, though he can exhibit no character."

I should, perhaps, have suppressed this disquisition concerning a person of whose merit and worth I think with respect, had he not attacked Johnson so outrageously in his *Life of Swift*, and at the same time, treated us his admirers as a set of pigmies. He who has provoked the lash of wit, cannot complain that he smarts from it.

Mrs. Montagu, a lady distinguished for having written an *Essay on Shakspeare*, being mentioned:—REYNOLDS. "I think that essay does her honour." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir; it does *her* honour, but it would do nobody else honour. I have, indeed, not read it all. But when I take up the end of a web, and find it packthread, I do not expect, by looking further, to find embroidery. Sir, I will venture, to say, there is not

one sentence of true criticism in her book." GARRICK.  
 "But, Sir, surely it shows how much Voltaire has  
 mistaken Shakspeare, which nobody else has done."  
 JOHNSON. "Sir, nobody else has thought it worth while.  
 And what merit is there in that? You may as well  
 praise a school-master for whipping a boy who has  
 construed ill. No, Sir, there is no real criticism in it:  
 none showing the beauty of thought, as formed on the  
 workings of the human heart."

The admirers of this *Essay* may be offended at the  
 slighting manner in which Johnson spoke of it: but  
 let it be remembered that he gave his honest opinion  
 unbiassed by any prejudice, or any proud jealousy of a  
 woman intruding herself into the chair of criticism; for  
 Sir Joshua Reynolds has told me, that when the *Essay*  
 first came out, and it was not known who had written  
 it, Johnson wondered how Sir Joshua could like it. At  
 this time Sir Joshua himself had received no informa-  
 tion concerning the author, except being assured by  
 one of our most eminent literati, that it was clear its  
 author did not know the Greek tragedies in the original.  
 One day at Sir Joshua's table, when it was related that  
 Mrs. Montagu, in an excess of compliment to the  
 author of a modern tragedy, had exclaimed, "I tremble  
 for Shakspeare," Johnson said, "When Shakspeare has  
 got — for his rival, and Mrs. Montagu for his  
 defender, he is in a poor state indeed."

## A DINNER AT DILLY'S

I DINED with him this day [1773] at the house of my  
 friends, Messrs. Edward and Charles Dilly, booksellers  
 in the Poultry: there were present, their eldest brother  
 Mr. Dilly of Bedfordshire, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Langton,  
 Mr. Claxton, Rev. Dr. Mayo, a dissenting minister,  
 the Rev. Mr. Toplady, and my friend the Rev. Mr.  
 Temple.

Hawkesworth's compilation of the *Voyages to the  
 South Sea* being mentioned;—JOHNSON. "Sir, if you  
 talk of it as a subject of commerce, it will be gainful;

if as a book that is to increase human knowledge, I believe there will not be much of that. Hawkesworth can tell only what the voyagers have told him; and they have found very little, only one new animal, I think." BOSWELL. "But many insects, Sir." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, as to insects, Ray reckons of British insects twenty thousand species. They might have stayed at home and discovered enough in that way."

Talking of birds, I mentioned Mr. Daines Barrington's ingenious *Essay* against the received notion of their migration. JOHNSON. "I think we have as good evidence for the migration of woodcocks as can be desired. We find they disappear at a certain time of the year, and appear again at a certain time of the year; and some of them, when weary in their flight have been known to alight on the rigging of ships far out at sea." One of the company observed, that there had been instances of some of them found in summer in Essex. JOHNSON. "Sir, that strengthens our argument. *Exceptio probat regulam*. Some being found shows that, if all remained, many would be found. A few sick or lame ones may be found." GOLDSMITH. "There is a partial migration of the swallows; the stronger ones migrate, the others do not."

BOSWELL. "I am well assured that the people of Otaheite, who have the bread tree, the fruit of which serves them for bread, laughed heartily when they were informed of the tedious process necessary with us to have bread; ploughing, sowing, harrowing, reaping, threshing, grinding, baking." JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, all ignorant savages will laugh when they are told of the advantages of civilized life. Were you to tell men who live without houses, how we pile brick upon brick, and rafter upon rafter, and that after a house is raised to a certain height, a man tumbles off a scaffold, and breaks his neck; he would laugh heartily at our folly in building; but it does not follow that men are better without houses. No, Sir (holding up a slice of a good loaf), this is better than the bread tree."

He repeated an argument which is to be found in his *Rambler*, against the notion that the brute creation



is endowed with the faculty of reason : " Birds build by instinct ; they never improve ; they built their first nest as well as any one they ever build." GOLDSMITH. " Yet we see, if you take away a bird's nest with the eggs in it, she will make a slighter nest and lay again." JOHNSON. " Sir, that is because at first she has full time, and makes her nest deliberately. In the case you mention she is pressed to lay, and must therefore make her nest quickly, and consequently it will be slight." GOLDSMITH. " The nidification of birds is what is least known in natural history, though one of the most curious things in it."

I introduced the subject of toleration. JOHNSON. " Every society has a right to preserve public peace and order, and therefore has a good right to prohibit the propagation of opinions which have a dangerous tendency. To say the *magistrate* has this right, is using an inadequate word : it is the *society* for which the magistrate is agent. He may be morally or theologically wrong in restraining the propagation of opinions which he thinks dangerous, but he is politically right." MAYO. " I am of opinion, Sir, that every man is entitled to liberty of conscience in religion ; and that the magistrate cannot restrain that right." JOHNSON. " Sir, I agree with you. Every man has a right to liberty of conscience, and with that the magistrate cannot interfere. People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking ; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases ; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right, for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what the society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks : but while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks." MAYO. " Then, Sir, we are to remain always in error, and truth never can prevail ; and the magistrate was right in persecuting the first Christians." JOHNSON. " Sir, the only method by which religious truth can be established is by martyrdom. The magistrate has a right to enforce



what he thinks; and he who is conscious of the truth has a right to suffer. I am afraid there is no other way of ascertaining the truth, but by persecution on the one hand and enduring it on the other." GOLDSMITH. "But how is a man to act, Sir? Though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrine, may he not think it wrong to expose himself to persecution? Has he a right to do so? Is it not, as it were, committing voluntary suicide?" JOHNSON. "Sir, as to voluntary suicide, as you call it, there are twenty thousand men in an army who will go without scruple to be shot at, and mount a breach for fivepence a day." GOLDSMITH. "But have they a moral right to do this?" JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, if you will not take the universal opinion of mankind, I have nothing to say. If mankind cannot defend their own way of thinking, I cannot defend it. Sir, if a man is in doubt whether it would be better for him to expose himself to martyrdom or not, he should not do it. He must be convinced that he has a delegation from heaven." GOLDSMITH. "I would consider whether there is the greater chance of good or evil upon the whole. If I see a man who has fallen into a well, I would wish to help him out; but if there is a greater probability that he shall pull me in, than that I shall pull him out, I would not attempt it. So, were I to go to Turkey, I might wish to convert the Grand Signor to the Christian faith; but when I considered that I should probably be put to death without effectuating my purpose in any degree, I should keep myself quiet." JOHNSON. "Sir, you must consider that we have perfect and imperfect obligations. Perfect obligations, which are generally not to do something, are clear and positive; as, 'Thou shalt not kill.' But charity, for instance, is not definable by limits. It is a duty to give to the poor; but no man can say how much another should give to the poor, or when a man has given too little to save his soul. In the same manner it is a duty to instruct the ignorant, and of consequence to convert infidels to Christianity; but no man in the common course of things is obliged to carry this to such a degree as to incur the danger of martyrdom, as no man

is obliged to strip himself to the shirt in order to give charity. I have said, that a man must be persuaded that he has a particular delegation from heaven." GOLDSMITH. "How is this to be known? Our first reformers, who were burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ——" JOHNSON (interrupting him). "Sir, they were not burnt for not believing bread and wine to be Christ, but for insulting those who did believe it. And, Sir, when the first reformers began, they did not intend to be martyred: as many of them ran away as could." BOSWELL. "But, Sir, there was your countryman Elwal, who you told me challenged King George with his black-guards, and his red-guards." JOHNSON. "My countryman, Elwal, Sir, should have been put in the stocks—a proper pulpit for him; and he'd have had a numerous audience. A man who preaches in the stocks will always have hearers enough." BOSWELL. "But Elwal thought himself in the right." JOHNSON. "We are not providing for mad people; there are places for them in the neighbourhood" (meaning Moorfields). MAYO. "But, Sir, is it not very hard that I should not be allowed to teach my children what I really believe to be the truth?" JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you might contrive to teach your children *extra scandalum*; but, Sir, the magistrate, if he knows it, has a right to restrain you. Suppose you teach your children to be thieves?" MAYO. "This is making a joke of the subject." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, take it thus:—that you teach them the community of goods; for which there are as many plausible arguments as for most erroneous doctrines. You teach them that all things at first were in common, and that no man had a right to any thing but as he laid his hands upon it; and that this still is, or ought to be, the rule amongst mankind. Here, Sir, you sap a great principle in society—property. And don't you think the magistrate would have a right to prevent you? Or, suppose you should teach your children the notion of the Adamites, and they shall run naked into the streets, would not the magistrate have a right to flog 'em into their doublets?" MAYO. "I think the magistrate has

no right to interfere till there is some overt act." BOSWELL. "So, Sir, though he sees an enemy to the state charging a blunderbuss, he is not to interfere till it is fired off!" MAYO. "He must be sure of its direction against the state." JOHNSON. "The magistrate is to judge of that. He has no right to restrain your thinking, because the evil centres in yourself. If a man were sitting at this table, and chopping off his fingers, the magistrate, as guardian of the community, has no authority to restrain him, however he might do it from kindness as a parent.—Though, indeed, upon more consideration, I think he may; as it is probable, that he who is chopping off his own fingers, may soon proceed to chop off those of other people. If I think it right to steal Mr. Dilly's plate, I am a bad man; but he can say nothing to me. If I make an open declaration that I think so, he will keep me out of his house. If I put forth my hand, I shall be sent to Newgate. This is the gradation of thinking, preaching, and acting: if a man thinks erroneously, he may keep his thoughts to himself, and nobody will trouble him; if he preaches erroneous doctrine, society may expel him; if he acts in consequence of it, the law takes place, and he is hanged." MAYO. "But, Sir, ought not Christians to have liberty of conscience?" JOHNSON. "I have already told you so, Sir. You're coming back to where you were." BOSWELL. "Dr. Mayo is always taking a return post-chaise, and going the stage over again. He has it at half-price." JOHNSON. "Dr. Mayo, like other champions for unlimited toleration, has got a set of words. Sir, it is no matter, politically, whether the magistrate be right or wrong. Suppose a club were to be formed, to drink confusion to King George the Third, and a happy restoration to Charles the Third, this would be very bad with respect to the state; but every member of that club must either conform to its rules, or be turned out of it. Old Baxter, I remember, maintains, that the magistrate should 'tolerate all things that are tolerable.' This is no good definition of toleration upon any principle; but it shows that he thought some things were not tolerable." TOPLADY.

"Sir, you have untwisted this difficult subject with great dexterity."

During this argument, Goldsmith sat in restless agitation, from a wish to get in and *shine*. Finding himself excluded, he had taken his hat to go away, but remained for some time with it in his hand, like a gamester, who, at the close of a long night, lingers for a little while, to see if he can have a favourable opening to finish with success. Once, when he was beginning to speak, he found himself overpowered by the loud voice of Johnson, who was at the opposite end of the table, and did not perceive Goldsmith's attempt. Thus disappointed of his wish to obtain the attention of the company, Goldsmith in a passion threw down his hat, looking angrily at Johnson, and exclaiming in a bitter tone, "*Take it.*" When Toplady was going to speak, Johnson uttered some sound, which led Goldsmith to think that he was beginning again, and taking the words from Toplady. Upon which, he seized this opportunity of venting his own envy and spleen, under the pretext of supporting another person: "Sir," said he to Johnson, "the gentleman has heard you patiently for an hour: pray allow us now to hear him." JOHNSON (sternly). "Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent." Goldsmith made no reply, but continued in the company for some time.

BOSWELL. "Pray, Mr. Dilly, how does Dr. Leland's *History of Ireland* sell?" JOHNSON (bursting forth with a generous indignation). "The Irish are in a most unnatural state; for we see there the minority prevailing over the majority. There is no instance, even in the ten persecutions, of such severity as that which the Protestants of Ireland have exercised against the Catholics. Did we tell them we have conquered them, it would be above board: to punish them by confiscation and other penalties, as rebels, was monstrous injustice. King William was not their lawful sovereign: he had not been acknowledged by the parliament of Ireland, when they appeared in arms against him."

He and Mr. Langton and I went together to the



Club, where we found Mr. Burke, Mr. Garrick, and some other members, and amongst them our friend Goldsmith, who sat silently brooding over Johnson's reprimand to him after dinner. Johnson perceived this, and said aside to some of us,—“I'll make Goldsmith forgive me;” and then called to him in a loud voice, “Dr. Goldsmith,—something passed to-day where you and I dined: I ask your pardon.” Goldsmith answered placidly, “It must be much from you, Sir, that I take ill.” And so at once the difference was over, and they were on as easy terms as ever, and Goldsmith rattled away as usual.

In our way to the Club to-night, when I regretted that Goldsmith would, upon every occasion, endeavour to shine, by which he often exposed himself, Mr. Langton observed, that he was not like Addison, who was content with the fame of his writings, and did not aim also at excellency in conversation, for which he found himself unfit: and that he said to a lady who complained of his having talked little in company, “Madam, I have but ninepence in ready money, but I can draw for a thousand pounds.” I observed that Goldsmith had a great deal of gold in his cabinet, but, not content with that, was always taking out his purse. JOHNSON. “Yes, Sir, and that so often an empty purse!”

Goldsmith's incessant desire of being conspicuous in company was the occasion of his sometimes appearing to such disadvantage as one should hardly have supposed possible in a man of his genius. When his literary reputation had risen deservedly high, and his society was much courted, he became very jealous of the extraordinary attention which was every where paid to Johnson. One evening, in a circle of wits, he found fault with me for talking of Johnson as entitled to the honour of unquestionable superiority. “Sir,” said he, “you are for making a monarchy of what should be a republic.”

He was still more mortified when, talking in a company with fluent vivacity, and, as he flattered himself, to the admiration of all who were present, a German

who sat next him, and perceived Johnson rolling himself as if about to speak, suddenly stopped him, saying, "Stay, stay—Toctor Shonson is going to say something." This was, no doubt, very provoking, especially to one so irritable as Goldsmith, who frequently mentioned it with strong expressions of indignation.

It may also be observed, that Goldsmith was sometimes content to be treated with an easy familiarity, but upon occasions would be consequential and important. An instance of this occurred in a small particular. Johnson had a way of contracting the names of his friends: as, Beauclerk, Beau; Boswell, Bozzy; Langton, Lanky; Murphy, Mur; Sheridan, Sherry. I remember one day, when Tom Davies was telling that Dr. Johnson said, "We are all in labour for a name to *Goldy's* play," Goldsmith seemed displeased that such a liberty should be taken with his name, and said, "I have often desired him not to call me *Goldy*." Tom was remarkably attentive to the most minute circumstance about Johnson. I recollect his telling me once, on my arrival in London, "Sir, our great friend has made an improvement on his appellation of old Mr. Sheridan: he calls him now *Sherry derry*."

## JOHNSON AND WILKES

I AM now to record a very curious incident in Dr. Johnson's life, which fell under my own observation; of which *pars magna fui*, and which I am persuaded will, with the liberal-minded, be much to his credit.

My desire of being acquainted with celebrated men of every description had made me, much about the same time, obtain an introduction to Dr. Samuel Johnson and to John Wilkes, Esq. Two men more different could perhaps not be selected out of all mankind. They had even attacked one another with some asperity in their writings; yet I lived in habits of friendship with both. I could fully relish the excellence of each; for I have ever delighted in that intellectual chemistry, which

can separate good qualities from evil in the same person.

Sir John Pringle, "mine own friend and my father's friend," between whom and Dr. Johnson I in vain wished to establish an acquaintance, as I respected and lived in intimacy with both of them, observed to me once, very ingeniously, "It is not in friendship as in mathematics, where two things, each equal to a third, are equal between themselves. You agree with Johnson as a middle quality, and you agree with me as a middle quality; but Johnson and I should not agree." Sir John was not sufficiently flexible; so I desisted; knowing, indeed, that the repulsion was equally strong on the part of Johnson; who, I know not from what cause, unless his being a Scotchman, had formed a very erroneous opinion of Sir John. But I conceived an irresistible wish, if possible, to bring Dr. Johnson and Mr. Wilkes together. How to manage it, was a nice and difficult matter.

My worthy booksellers and friends, Messrs. Dilly in the Poultry, at whose hospitable and well-covered table I have seen a greater number of literary men than at any other, except that of Sir Joshua Reynolds, had invited me to meet Mr. Wilkes and some more gentlemen on Wednesday, May 15 [1776]. "Pray," said I, "let us have Dr. Johnson." "What, with Mr. Wilkes? not for the world," said Mr. Edward Dilly: "Dr. Johnson would never forgive me." "Come," said I, "if you'll let me negotiate for you, I will be answerable that all shall go well." DILLY. "Nay, if you will take it upon you, I am sure I shall be very happy to see them both here."

Notwithstanding the high veneration which I entertained for Dr. Johnson, I was sensible that he was sometimes a little actuated by the spirit of contradiction, and by means of that I hoped I should gain my point. I was persuaded that if I had come upon him with a direct proposal, "Sir, will you dine in company with Jack Wilkes?" he would have flown into a passion, and would probably have answered, "Dine with Jack Wilkes, Sir! I'd as soon dine with Jack Ketch."

I, therefore, while we were sitting quietly by ourselves at his house in an evening, took occasion to open my plan thus: "Mr. Dilly, Sir, sends his respectful compliments to you, and would be happy if you would do him the honour to dine with him on Wednesday next along with me, as I must soon go to Scotland." JOHNSON. "Sir, I am obliged to Mr. Dilly. I will wait upon him—"

BOSWELL. "Provided, Sir, I suppose, that the company which he is to have is agreeable to you?"

JOHNSON. "What do you mean, Sir? What do you take me for? Do you think I am so ignorant of the world as to imagine that I am to prescribe to a gentleman what company he is to have at his table?"

BOSWELL. "I beg your pardon, Sir, for wishing to prevent you from meeting people whom you might not like. Perhaps he may have some of what he calls his patriotic friends with him."

JOHNSON. "Well, Sir, and what then? What care I for his *patriotic friends*?"

Poh!" BOSWELL. "I should not be surprised to find Jack Wilkes there."

JOHNSON. "And if Jack Wilkes *should* be there, what is that to *me*, Sir? My dear friend, let us have no more of this. I am sorry to be

angry with you; but really it is treating me strangely to talk to me as if I could not meet any company whatever, occasionally."

BOSWELL. "Pray forgive me, Sir: I meant well. But you shall meet whoever comes, for me." Thus I secured him, and told Dilly that he would find him very well pleased to be one of his guests on the day appointed.

Upon the much expected Wednesday, I called on him about half an hour before dinner, as I often did when we were to dine out together, to see that he was ready in time, and to accompany him. I found him buffeting his books, as upon a former occasion, covered with dust, and making no preparation for going abroad.

"How is this, Sir?" said I. "Don't you recollect that you are to dine at Mr. Dilly's?"

JOHNSON. "Sir, I did not think of going to Dilly's: it went out of my head. I have ordered dinner at home with Mrs.

Williams."

BOSWELL. "But, my dear Sir, you know you were engaged to Mr. Dilly, and I told him so. He



will expect you, and will be much disappointed if you don't come." JOHNSON. "You must talk to Mrs Williams about this."

Here was a sad dilemma. I feared that what I was so confident I had secured would yet be frustrated. He had accustomed himself to show Mrs. Williams such a degree of humane attention, as frequently imposed some restraint upon him; and I knew that if she should be obstinate, he would not stir. I hastened downstairs to the blind lady's room, and told her I was in great uneasiness, for Dr. Johnson had engaged to me to dine this day at Mr. Dilly's; but that he had told me he had forgotten his engagement, and had ordered dinner at home. "Yes, Sir," said she, pretty peevishly, "Dr. Johnson is to dine at home." "Madam," said I, "his respect for you is such, that I know he will not leave you, unless you absolutely desire it. But as you have so much of his company, I hope you will be good enough to forego it for a day, as Mr. Dilly is a very worthy man, has frequently had agreeable parties at his house for Dr. Johnson, and will be vexed if the Doctor neglects him to-day. And then, Madam, be pleased to consider my situation; I carried the message, and I assured Mr. Dilly that Dr. Johnson was to come; and no doubt he has made a dinner, and invited a company, and boasted of the honour he expected to have. I shall be quite disgraced if the Doctor is not there." She gradually softened to my solicitations, which were certainly as earnest as most entreaties to ladies upon any occasion, and was graciously pleased to empower me to tell Dr. Johnson, "That, all things considered, she thought he should certainly go." I flew back to him, still in dust, and careless of what should be the event, "indifferent in his choice to go or stay;" but as soon as I had announced to him Mrs. Williams's consent, he roared, "Frank, a clean shirt!" and was very soon dressed. When I had him fairly seated in a hackney-coach with me, I exulted as much as a fortune-hunter who has got an heiress into a post-chaise with him to set out for Gretna Green.

When we entered Mr. Dilly's drawing-room, he found himself in the midst of a company he did not know. I kept myself snug and silent, watching how he would conduct himself. I observed him whispering to Mr. Dilly, "Who is that gentleman, Sir?"—"Mr. Arthur Lee." JOHNSON. "Too, too, too" (under his breath), which was one of his habitual mutterings. Mr. Arthur Lee could not but be very obnoxious to Johnson, for he was not only a *patriot*, but an *American*. He was afterwards minister from the United States at the court of Madrid. "And who is the gentleman in lace?"—"Mr. Wilkes, Sir." This information confounded him still more; he had some difficulty to restrain himself, and, taking up a book, sat down upon a window-seat and read, or at least kept his eye upon it intently for some time, till he composed himself. His feelings, I dare say, were awkward enough. But he no doubt recollected having rated me for supposing that he could be at all disconcerted by any company, and he therefore resolutely set himself to behave quite as an easy man of the world, who could adapt himself at once to the disposition and manners of those whom he might chance to meet.

The cheering sound of "Dinner is upon the table," dissolved his reverie, and we *all* sat down without any symptom of ill humour. There were present, beside Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Arthur Lee, who was an old companion of mine when he studied physic at Edinburgh, Mr. (now Sir John) Miller, Dr. Lettsom, and Mr. Slater, the druggist. Mr. Wilkes placed himself next to Dr. Johnson, and behaved to him with so much attention and politeness, that he gained upon him insensibly. No man eat more heartily than Johnson, or loved better what was nice and delicate. Mr. Wilkes was very assiduous in helping him to some fine veal. "Pray give me leave, Sir—It is better here—A little of the brown—Some fat, Sir—A little of the stuffing—Some gravy—Let me have the pleasure of giving you some butter—Allow me to recommend a squeeze of this orange; or the lemon, perhaps, may have more zest."—"Sir, Sir, I am obliged to you, Sir," cried Johnson,

bowing, and turning his head to him with a look for some time of "surly virtue," but, in a short while, of complacency.

Foote being mentioned, Johnson said, "He is not a good mimic." One of the company added, "A merry-andrew, a buffoon." JOHNSON. "But he has wit too, and is not deficient in ideas, or in fertility and variety of imagery, and not empty of reading; he has knowledge enough to fill up his part. One species of wit he has in an eminent degree, that of escape. You drive him into a corner with both hands; but he's gone, Sir, when you think you have got him—like an animal that jumps over your head. Then he has a great range for wit; he never lets truth stand between him and a jest, and he is sometimes mighty coarse. Garrick is under many restraints from which Foote is free." WILKES. "Garrick's wit is more like Lord Chesterfield's." JOHNSON. "The first time I was in company with Foote was at Fitzherbert's. Having no good opinion of the fellow, I was resolved not to be pleased; and it is very difficult to please a man against his will. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back upon my chair, and fairly laugh it out. No, Sir, he was irresistible. He upon one occasion experienced, in an extraordinary degree, the efficacy of his powers of entertaining. Amongst the many and various modes which he tried of getting money, he became a partner with a small-beer brewer, and he was to have a share of the profits for procuring customers among his numerous acquaintance. Fitzherbert was one who took his small-beer; but it was so bad that the servants resolved not to drink it. They were at some loss how to notify their resolution, being afraid of offending their master, who they knew liked Foote much as a companion. At last they fixed upon a little black boy, who was rather a favourite, to be their deputy, and deliver their remonstrance; and, having invested him with the whole authority of the kitchen, he was to inform Mr. Fitzherbert, in all their

names, upon a certain day, that they would drink Foote's small-beer no longer. On that day Foote happened to dine at Fitzherbert's, and this boy served at table; he was so delighted with Foote's stories, and merriment, and grimace, that when he went down stairs, he told them, 'This is the finest man I have ever seen. I will not deliver your message. I will drink his small-beer.' "

Somebody observed that Garrick could not have done this. WILKES. "Garrick would have made the small-beer still smaller. He is now leaving the stage; but he will play *Scrub* all his life." I knew that Johnson would let nobody attack Garrick but himself, as Garrick said to me, and I had heard him praise his liberality; so to bring out his commendation of his celebrated pupil, I said, loudly, "I have heard Garrick is liberal." JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so when he came to have money, he probably was very unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could; and I am of opinion, the reputation of avarice which he has had has been very lucky for him, and prevented his having made enemies. You despise a man for avarice, but do not hate him. Garrick might have been much better attacked for living with more splendour than is suitable to a player; if they had had the wit to have assaulted him in that quarter, they might have galled him more. But they have kept clamouring about his avarice, which has rescued him from much obloquy and envy."

Talking of the great difficulty of obtaining authentic information for biography, Johnson told us, "When I was a young fellow, I wanted to write the *Life of Dryden*, and, in order to get materials, I applied to the only two persons then alive who had seen him; these were old Swinney, and old Cibber. Swinney's information was no more than this 'That at Will's coffee-house Dryden had a particular chair for himself,



which was set by the fire in winter, and was then called his winter chair; and that it was carried out for him to the balcony in summer, and was called his summer chair.' Cibber could tell no more but 'That he remembered him a decent old man, arbiter of critical disputes at Will's.' You are to consider that Cibber was then at a great distance from Dryden, had perhaps one leg only in the room, and durst not draw in the other."

BOSWELL. "Yet Cibber was a man of observation?"

JOHNSON. "I think not." BOSWELL. "You will allow his *Apology* to be well done." JOHNSON. "Very well done, to be sure, Sir. That book is a striking proof of the justice of Pope's remark:—

'Each might his several province well command,  
Would all but stoop to what they understand.'

BOSWELL. "And his plays are good." JOHNSON. "Yes; but that was his trade; *l'esprit du corps*; he had been all his life among players and play-writers. I wondered that he had so little to say in conversation, for he had kept the best company, and learnt all that can be got by the ear. He abused Pindar to me, and then showed me an ode of his own, with an absurd couplet, making a linnet soar on an eagle's wing. I told him that when the ancients made a simile, they always made it like something real."

Mr. Wilkes remarked, that "among all the bold flights of Shakspeare's imagination, the boldest was making Birnam-wood march to Dunsinane; creating a wood where there never was a shrub! a wood in Scotland! ha! ha! ha!" And he also observed, that "the clannish slavery of the Highlands of Scotland was the single exception to Milton's remark of 'the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty,' being worshipped in all hilly countries." "When I was at Inverary," said he, "on a visit to my old friend Archibald, Duke of Argyle, his dependents congratulated me on being such a favourite of his Grace. I said, 'It is, then, gentlemen, truly lucky for me; for if I had displeased the duke, and he had wished it, there is not a Campbell among you but would have been ready to bring John Wilkes's

head to him in a charger. It would have been only

‘Off with his head! so much for *Aylesbury*.’

I was then member for Aylesbury.”

Mr. Arthur Lee mentioned some Scotch who had taken possession of a barren part of America, and wondered why they should choose it. JOHNSON. “Why, Sir, all barrenness is comparative. The *Scotch* would not know it to be barren.” BOSWELL. “Come, come, he is flattering the English. You have now been in Scotland, Sir, and say if you did not see meat and drink enough there.” JOHNSON. “Why, yes, Sir; meat and drink enough to give the inhabitants sufficient strength to run away from home.” All these quick and lively sallies were said sportively, quite in jest, and with a smile, which showed that he meant only wit. Upon this topic he and Mr. Wilkes could perfectly assimilate; here was a bond of union between them, and I was conscious that as both had visited Caledonia, both were fully satisfied of the strange narrow ignorance of those who imagine that it is a land of famine. But they amused themselves with persevering in the old jokes. When I claimed a superiority for Scotland over England in one respect, that no man can be arrested there for a debt merely because another swears it against him; but there must first be the judgement of a court of law ascertaining its justice; and that a seizure of the person, before judgement is obtained, can take place only if his creditors should swear that he is about to fly from the country, or, as it is technically expressed, is *in meditatione fugæ*. WILKES. “That, I should think, may be safely sworn of all the Scotch nation.” JOHNSON (to Mr. Wilkes). “You must know, Sir, I lately took my friend Boswell, and showed him genuine civilized life in an English provincial town. I turned him loose at Lichfield, my native city, that he might see for once real civility; for you know he lives among savages in Scotland, and among rakes in London.” WILKES. “Except when he is with grave, sober, decent people like you and me.” JOHNSON (smiling). “And we ashamed of him.”

They were quite frank and easy. Johnson told the story of his asking Mrs. Macaulay to allow her footman to sit down with them, to prove the ridiculousness of the argument for the equality of mankind; and he said to me afterwards, with a nod of satisfaction, "You saw Mr. Wilkes acquiesced." Wilkes talked with all imaginable freedom of the ludicrous title given to the attorney-general, *Diabolus regis*; adding, "I have reason to know something about that officer; for I was prosecuted for a libel." Johnson, who many people would have supposed must have been furiously angry at hearing this talked of so lightly, said not a word. He was now, *indeed*, "a good-humoured fellow."

After dinner we had an accession of Mrs. Knowles, the Quaker lady, well known for her various talents, and of Mr. Alderman Lee. Amidst some patriotic groans, somebody (I think the Alderman) said, "Poor old England is lost." JOHNSON. "Sir, it is not so much to be lamented that old England is lost, as that the Scotch have found it." WILKES. "Had Lord Bute governed Scotland only, I should not have taken the trouble to write his eulogy, and dedicate *Mortimer* to him."

This record, though by no means so perfect as I could wish, will serve to give a notion of a very curious interview, which was not only pleasing at the time, but had the agreeable and benignant effect of reconciling any animosity, and sweetening any acidity, which, in the various bustle of political contest, had been produced in the minds of two men, who, though widely different, had so many things in common—classical learning, modern literature, wit and humour, and ready repartee—that it would have been much to be regretted if they had been for ever at a distance from each other.

Mr. Burke gave me much credit for this successful *negotiation*; and pleasantly said, "that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*."

I attended Dr. Johnson home, and had the satisfac-

tion to hear him tell Mrs. Williams how much he had been pleased with Mr. Wilkes's company, and what an agreeable day he had passed.

“LIVES OF THE ENGLISH POETS”

[IN 1773 Johnson made with Boswell a tour to the Hebrides, which lasted ninety-four days. Early in 1775 he published *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. Though he wrote numerous pamphlets the work which chiefly occupied the years following was that described below.]

In 1781, Johnson at last completed his *Lives of the Poets*, of which he gives this account: “Some time in March I finished the *Lives of the Poets*, which I wrote in my usual way, dilatorily and hastily, unwilling to work, and working with vigour and haste.” In a memorandum previous to this, he says of them: “Written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety.”

This is the work which, of all Dr. Johnson's writings, will perhaps be read most generally, and with most pleasure. Philology and biography were his favourite pursuits, and those who lived most in intimacy with him, heard him upon all occasions, when there was a proper opportunity, take delight in expatiating upon the various merits of the English poets: upon the niceties of their characters, and the events of their progress through the world which they contributed to illuminate. His mind was so full of that kind of information, and it was so well arranged in his memory, that in performing what he had undertaken in this way, he had little more to do than to put his thoughts upon paper; exhibiting first each poet's life, and then subjoining a critical examination of his genius and works. But when he began to write, the subject swelled in such a manner, that instead of prefaces to each poet, of no more than a few pages, as he had originally intended, he produced an ample, rich, and most entertaining view of them in every respect. The



booksellers, justly sensible of the great additional value of the copyright, presented him with another hundred pounds, over and above two hundred, for which his agreement was to furnish such prefaces as he thought fit.

This was, however, but a small recompense for such a collection of biography, and such principles and illustrations of criticism, as, if digested and arranged in one system, by some modern Aristotle or Longinus, might form a code upon that subject, such as no other nation can show. As he was so good as to make me a present of the greatest part of the original, and indeed only, manuscript of this admirable work, I have an opportunity of observing with wonder the correctness with which he rapidly struck off such glowing composition.

The Life of COWLEY he himself considered as the best of the whole, on account of the dissertation which it contains on the *Metaphysical Poets*. Dryden, whose critical abilities were equal to his poetical, had mentioned them in his excellent *Dedication* of his *Juvenal*, but had barely mentioned them. Johnson has exhibited them at large, with such happy illustration from their writings, and in so luminous a manner, that indeed he may be allowed the full merit of novelty, and to have discovered to us, as it were, a new planet in the poetical hemisphere.

In the Life of WALLER, Johnson gives a distinct and animated narrative of public affairs in that variegated period, with strong yet nice touches of character; and having a fair opportunity to display his political principles, does it with an unqualified manly confidence, and satisfies his readers how nobly he might have executed a *Tory History* of his country.

So easy is his style in these *Lives*, that I do not recollect more than three uncommon or learned words: one, when giving an account of the approach of Waller's mortal disease, he says, "he found his legs grow *tumid*;" by using the expression his legs *swelled*, he would have avoided this; and there would have been no impropriety in its being followed by the inter-

esting question to his physician, “What that *swelling* meant?” Another, when he mentions that Pope had *emitted* proposals; when *published* or *issued* would have been more readily understood; and a third, when he calls Orrery and Dr. Delaney writers both undoubtedly *veracious*; when *true*, *honest*, or *faithful* might have been used. Yet, it must be owned, that none of these are *hard* or *too big* words; that custom would make them seem as easy as any others; and that a language is richer and capable of more beauty of expression, by having a greater variety of synonyms.

Against his Life of MILTON, the hounds of Whiggism have opened in full cry. But of Milton’s great excellence as a poet, where shall we find such a blazon as by the hand of Johnson? I shall select only the following passage concerning *Paradise Lost*:—“Fancy can hardly forbear to conjecture with what temper Milton surveyed the silent progress of his work, and marked his reputation stealing its way in a kind of subterraneous current, through fear and silence. I cannot but conceive him calm and confident, little disappointed, not at all dejected, relying on his own merit with steady consciousness, and waiting, without impatience, the vicissitudes of opinion, and the impartiality of a future generation.”

That a man, who venerated the church and monarchy as Johnson did, should speak with a just abhorrence of Milton as a politician, or rather as a daring foe to good polity, was surely to be expected; and to those who censure him, I would recommend his commentary on Milton’s celebrated complaint of his situation, when by the lenity of Charles the Second, “a lenity of which,” as Johnson well observes, “the world has had perhaps no other example, he, who had written in justification of the murder of his sovereign, was safe under an *Act of Oblivion*.” “No sooner is he safe than he finds himself in danger, *fallen on evil days and evil tongues, with darkness and with dangers compassed round*. This darkness, had his eyes been better employed, had undoubtedly deserved compassion; but

to add the mention of danger was ungrateful and unjust. He was fallen, indeed, on *evil days*; the time was come in which regicides could no longer boast their wickedness. But of *evil tongues* for Milton to complain, required impudence at least equal to his other powers; Milton, whose warmest advocates must allow, that he never spared any asperity of reproach, or brutality of insolence."

I could, with pleasure, expatiate upon the masterly execution of the Life of DRYDEN, which we have seen was one of Johnson's literary projects at an early period, and which it is remarkable, that after desisting from it, from a supposed scantiness of materials, he should; at an advanced age, have exhibited so amply.

In drawing Dryden's character, Johnson has given, though I suppose unintentionally, some touches of his own. Thus: "The power that predominated in his intellectual operations was rather strong reason than quick sensibility. Upon all occasions that were presented, he studied rather than felt; and produced sentiments not such as nature enforces, but meditation supplies. With the simple and elemental passions, as they spring separate in the mind, he seems not much acquainted. He is, therefore, with all his variety of excellence, not often pathetic, and had so little sensibility of the power of effusions purely natural, that he did not esteem them in others." It may indeed be observed, that in all the numerous writings of Johnson, whether in prose or verse, and even in his tragedy, of which the subject is the distress of an unfortunate princess, there is not a single passage that ever drew a tear.

The Life of POPE was written by Johnson *con amore*, both from the early possession which that writer had taken of his mind, and from the pleasure which he must have felt, in for ever silencing all attempts to lessen his poetical fame, by demonstrating his excellence, and pronouncing the following triumphant eulogium:

"After all this, it is surely superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, Whether Pope was

a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, If Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition, will only show the narrowness of the definer; though a definition which shall exclude Pope will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed."

I remember once to have heard Johnson say, "Sir, a thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope." That power must undoubtedly be allowed its due share in enhancing the value of his captivating composition.

Johnson, who had done liberal justice to Warburton in his edition of Shakspeare, which was published during the life of that powerful writer, with still greater liberality took an opportunity, in the life of Pope, of paying the tribute due to him when he was no longer in "high place," but numbered with the dead.

It seems strange, that two such men as Johnson and Warburton, who lived in the same age and country, should not only not have been in any degree of intimacy, but been almost personally unacquainted. But such instances, though we must wonder at them, are not rare. If I am rightly informed, after a careful inquiry, they never met but once, which was at the house of Mrs. French, in London, well known for her elegant assemblies and bringing eminent characters together. The interview proved to be mutually agreeable.

I am well informed, that Warburton said of Johnson, "I admire him, but I cannot bear his style:" and that Johnson being told of this, said, "That is exactly my case as to him." The manner in which he expressed his admiration of the fertility of Warburton's genius and of the variety of his materials, was, "The table is always full, Sir. He brings things from the north, and the south, and from every quarter."

Speaking of Pope's not having been known to excel



in conversation, Johnson observes, that "traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, or sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, wise or merry; and that one apophthegm only is recorded." In this respect, Pope differed widely from Johnson, whose conversation was, perhaps, more admirable than even his writings, however excellent. Mr. Wilkes has, however, favoured me with one repartee of Pope, of which Johnson was not informed. Johnson, after justly censuring him for having "nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings," tells us, "yet a little regard shown him by the Prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his royal highness, *how he could love a prince while he disliked kings?*" The answer which Pope made was, "The young lion is harmless, and even playful; but when his claws are full grown, he becomes cruel, dreadful, and mischievous."

But although we have no collection of Pope's sayings, it is not therefore to be concluded, that he was not agreeable in social intercourse; for Johnson has been heard to say, that "the happiest conversation is that of which nothing is distinctly remembered, but a general effect of pleasing impression."

In the Life of ADDISON we find an unpleasing account of his having lent Steele a hundred pounds, and "reclaimed his loan by an execution." In the new edition of the *Biographia Britannica*, the authenticity of this anecdote is denied. But Mr. Malone has obliged me with the following note concerning it:—

"Many persons having doubts concerning this fact, I applied to Dr. Johnson, to learn on what authority he asserted it. He told me, he had it from Savage, who lived in intimacy with Steele, and who mentioned, that Steele told him the story with tears in his eyes. Ben Victor, Dr. Johnson said, likewise informed him of this remarkable transaction, from the relation of Mr. Wilks the comedian, who was also an intimate of Steele's. Some, in defence of Addison, have said, that 'the act was done with the good-natured view of rousing Steele, and correcting that profusion which

always made him necessitous.' 'If that were the case,' said Johnson, 'and that he only wanted to alarm Steele, he would afterwards have *returned* the money to his friend, which it is not pretended that he did.' 'This too,' he added, 'might be retorted by an advocate for Steele, who might allege, that he did not repay the loan *intentionally*, merely to see whether Addison would be mean and ungenerous enough to make use of legal process to recover it. But of such speculations there is no end; we cannot dive into the hearts of men; but their actions are open to observation.'

"I then mentioned to him that some people thought that Mr. Addison's character was so pure, that the fact, *though true*, ought to have been suppressed. He saw no reason for this. 'If nothing but the bright side of characters should be shown, we should sit down in despondency, and think it utterly impossible to imitate them in *anything*. The sacred writers,' he observed, 'related the vicious, as well as the virtuous actions of men; which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from *despair*, into which otherwise they would naturally fall, were they not supported by the recollection that others had offended like themselves, and by penitence and amendment of life had been restored to the favour of Heaven.'"

As the introduction to his critical examination of the genius and writings of YOUNG, he did Mr. Herbert Croft, then a barrister of Lincoln's Inn, now a clergyman, the honour to adopt a Life of Young, written by that gentleman, who was the friend of Dr. Young's son, and wished to vindicate him from some very erroneous remarks to his prejudice. Mr. Croft's performance was subjected to the revision of Dr. Johnson, as appears from the following note to Mr. John Nichols:

"This life of Dr. Young was written by a friend of his son. What is crossed with black is expunged by the author, what is crossed with red is expunged by me. If you find any thing more that can be well omitted, I shall not be sorry to see it yet shorter."

It has always appeared to me to have a considerable

share of merit, and to display a pretty successful imitation of Johnson's style. When I mentioned this to a very eminent literary character, he opposed me vehemently, exclaiming, "No, no, it is *not* a good imitation of Johnson; it has all his pomp without his force; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength." This was an image so happy, that one might have thought he would have been satisfied with it; but he was not. And setting his mind again to work, he added, with exquisite felicity, "It has all the contortions of the sibyl, without the inspiration."

Mr. Croft very properly guards us against supposing that Young was a gloomy man; and mentions, that "his parish was indebted to the good-humour of the author of the *Night Thoughts* for an assembly and a bowling-green." A letter from a noble foreigner is quoted, in which he is said to have been "very pleasant in conversation."

Mr. Langton, who frequently visited him, informs me that there was an air of benevolence in his manner, but that he could obtain from him less information than he had hoped to receive from one who had lived so much in intercourse with the brightest men of what has been called the Augustan age of England; and that he showed a degree of eager curiosity concerning the common occurrences that were then passing, which appeared somewhat remarkable in a man of such intellectual stores, of such an advanced age, and who had retired from life with declared disappointment in his expectations.

An instance at once of his pensive turn of mind, and his cheerfulness of temper, appeared in a little story, which he himself told to Mr. Langton, when they were walking in his garden: "Here (said he) I had put a handsome sun-dial, with this inscription, *Eheu fugaces!* which (speaking with a smile) was sadly verified, for by the next morning my dial had been carried off."

In the Life of SWIFT, it appears to me that Johnson had a certain degree of prejudice against that extraordinary man. Mr. Thomas Sheridan imputed it to a supposed apprehension in Johnson, that Swift had not



been sufficiently active in obtaining for him an Irish degree when it was solicited; but of this there was not sufficient evidence; and let me not presume to charge Johnson with injustice, because he did not think so highly of the writings of this author, as I have done from my youth upwards. Yet that he had an unfavourable bias is evident, were it only from that passage in which he speaks of Swift's practice of saving, as "first ridiculous, and at last detestable;" and yet, after some examination of circumstances, finds himself obliged to own, that "it will perhaps appear that he only liked one mode of expense better than another, and saved merely that he might have something to give."

While the world in general was filled with admiration of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, there were narrow circles in which prejudice and resentment were fostered, and from which attacks of different sorts issued against him. By some violent Whigs he was arraigned of injustice to Milton; by some Cambridge men, of depreciating Gray; and his expressing with a dignified freedom what he really thought of George, Lord Lyttelton, gave offence to some of the friends of that nobleman, and particularly produced a declaration of war against him from Mrs. Montagu, the ingenious essayist on Shakspeare, between whom and his lordship a commerce of reciprocal compliments had long been carried on. These minute inconveniences gave not the least disturbance to Johnson. He nobly said, when I talked to him on the feeble though shrill outcry which had been raised, "Sir, I considered myself as entrusted with a certain portion of truth. I have given my opinion sincerely; let them show where they think me wrong."

A collection of  
sayings

## JOHNSONIANA

MR. OGILVIE was unlucky enough to choose for the topic of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying, that there was very rich land around Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physic there, contradicted this, very untruly,



with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed, that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. JOHNSON. "I believe, Sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, Sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees, is the high road that leads him to England." This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those who admire the rude grandeur of nature cannot deny it to Caledonia.

"I know no man," said he, "who is more master of his wife and family than Thrale. If he but holds up a finger, he is obeyed. It is a great mistake to suppose that she is above him in literary attainments. She is more flippant; but he has ten times her learning: he is a regular scholar; but her learning is that of a schoolboy in one of the lower forms." My readers may naturally wish for some representation of the figures of this couple. Mr. Thrale was tall, well proportioned, and stately. As for *Madam*, or *my Mistress*, by which epithets Johnson used to mention Mrs. Thrale, she was short, plump, and brisk. She has herself given us a lively view of the idea which Johnson had of her person, on her appearing before him in a dark-coloured gown: "You little creatures should never wear those sort of clothes, however; they are unsuitable in every way. What! have not all insects gay colours?" Mr. Thrale gave his wife a liberal indulgence, both in the choice of their company, and in the mode of entertaining them. He understood and valued Johnson, without remission, from their first acquaintance to the day of his death. Mrs. Thrale was enchanted with Johnson's conversation for its own sake, and had also a very allowable vanity in appearing to be honoured with the attention of so celebrated a man.

Mr. Ferguson, the self-taught philosopher, told him of a new-invented machine which went without horses: a man who sat in it turned a handle, which worked a

spring that drove it forward. "Then, Sir," said Johnson, "what is gained is, the man has his choice whether he will move himself alone, or himself and the machine too." Dominicetti being mentioned, he would not allow him any merit. "There is nothing in all this boasted system. No, Sir; medicated baths can be no better than warm water: their only effect can be that of tepid moisture." One of the company took the other side, maintaining that medicines of various sorts, and some too of most powerful effect, are introduced into the human frame by the medium of the pores; and, therefore, when warm water is impregnated with salutiferous substances, it may produce great effects as a bath. This appeared to me very satisfactory. Johnson did not answer it; but talking for victory, and determined to be master of the field, he had recourse to the device which Goldsmith imputed to him in the witty words of one of Cibber's comedies: "There is no arguing with Johnson; for when his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the butt-end of it." He turned to the gentleman, "Well, Sir, go to Dominicetti, and get thyself fumigated; but be sure that the steam be directed to thy *head*, for *that* is the *peccant part*." This produced a triumphant roar of laughter from the motley assembly of philosophers, printers, and dependents, male and female.

A learned gentleman, who, in the course of conversation, wished to inform us of this simple fact, that the counsel upon the circuit of Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took, I suppose, seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plenitude of phrase told us, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town-hall; that by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers; that the lodgings of the counsel were near the town-hall; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Johnson sat in great impatience till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully however), "It is a pity, Sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth."

He would not allow Scotland to derive any credit from Lord Mansfield; for he was educated in England. "Much," said he, "may be made of a Scotchman, if he be *caught* young."

A gentleman having, to some of the usual arguments for drinking, added this:—"You know, Sir, drinking drives away care, and makes us forget whatever is disagreeable. Would not you allow a man to drink for that reason?" JOHNSON. "Yes, Sir, if he sat next *you*."

Mr. Strahan had taken a poor boy from the country as an apprentice, upon Johnson's recommendation. Johnson having inquired after him, said, "Mr. Strahan, let me have five guineas on account, and I'll give this boy one. Nay, if a man recommends a boy, and does nothing for him, it is sad work. Call him down."—I followed him into the court-yard, behind Mr. Strahan's house; and there I had a proof of what I heard him profess, that he talked alike to all. "Some people tell you that they let themselves down to the capacity of their hearers. I never do that. I speak uniformly, in as intelligible a manner as I can."—"Well, my boy, how do you go on?" "Pretty well, Sir; but they are afraid I an't strong enough for some parts of the business." JOHNSON. "Why, I shall be sorry for it; for, when you consider with how little mental power and corporeal labour a printer can get a guinea a week, it is a very desirable occupation for you. Do you hear—take all the pains you can; and if this does not do, we must think of some other way of life for you. There's a guinea."—Here was one of the many, many instances of his active benevolence. At the same time, the slow and sonorous solemnity with which, while he bent himself down, he addressed a little thick short-legged boy, contrasted with the boy's awkwardness and awe, could not but excite some ludicrous emotions.

"After having talked slightly of music, he was observed to listen very attentively while Miss Thrale played on the harpsichord, and with eagerness he called to her, 'Why don't you dash away like Burney?' Dr. Burney upon this said to him, 'I believe, Sir, we shall



make a musician of you at last.' Johnson with candid complacency replied, 'Sir, I shall be glad to have a new sense given to me.'"

Though he often enlarged upon the evil of intoxication, he was by no means harsh and unforgiving to those who indulged in occasional excess in wine. One of his friends, I well remember, came to sup at a tavern with him and some other gentlemen, and too plainly discovered that he had drunk too much at dinner. When one who loved mischief, thinking to produce a severe censure, asked Johnson, a few days afterwards, "Well, Sir, what did your friend say to you, as an apology for being in such a situation?" Johnson answered, "Sir, he said all that a man *should* say: he said he was sorry for it."

I introduced Aristotle's doctrine, in his *Art of Poetry*, "the purging of the passions," as the purpose of tragedy. "But how are the passions to be purged by terror and pity?" said I, with an assumed air of ignorance, to incite him to talk, for which it was often necessary to employ some address. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, you are to consider what is the meaning of purging in the original sense. It is to expel impurities from the human body. The mind is subject to the same imperfection. The passions are the great movers of human actions; but they are mixed with such impurities, that it is necessary they should be purged or refined by means of terror and pity. For instance, ambition is a noble passion; but by seeing upon the stage, that a man who is so excessively ambitious as to raise himself by injustice is punished, we are terrified at the fatal consequences of such a passion. In the same manner, a certain degree of resentment is necessary; but if we see that a man carries it too far, we pity the object of it, and are taught to moderate that passion." My record upon this occasion does great injustice to Johnson's expression, which was so forcible and brilliant, that Mr. Cradock whispered me, "O that his words were written in a book!"

He would not allow me to praise a lady then at Bath;



observing, "She does not gain upon me, Sir; I think her empty-headed." He was, indeed, a stern critic upon characters and manners. Even Mrs. Thrale did not escape his friendly animadversion at times. When he and I were one day endeavouring to ascertain, article by article, how one of our friends could possibly spend as much money in his family as he told us he did, she interrupted us by a lively extravagant sally, on the expense of clothing his children, describing it in a very ludicrous and fanciful manner. Johnson looked a little angry, and said, "Nay, Madam, when you are declaiming, declaim; and when you are calculating, calculate." At another time, when she said, perhaps affectedly, "I don't like to fly;"—JOHNSON. "With *your* wings, Madam, you *must* fly: but have a care, there are *clippers* abroad."

Johnson attacked the Americans with intemperate vehemence of abuse. I said something in their favour; and added, that I was always sorry when he talked on that subject. This, it seems, exasperated him; though he said nothing at the time. The cloud was charged with sulphureous vapour, which was afterwards to burst in thunder. We talked of a gentleman who was running out his fortune in London; and I said, "We must get him out of it. All his friends must quarrel with him, and that will soon drive him away." JOHNSON. "Nay, Sir, we'll send you to him. If your company does not drive a man out of his house, nothing will." This was a horrible shock, for which there was no visible cause. I afterwards asked him, why he had said so harsh a thing. JOHNSON. "Because, Sir, you made me angry about the Americans." BOSWELL. "But why did you not take your revenge directly?" JOHNSON (smiling). "Because, Sir, I had nothing ready. A man cannot strike till he has his weapons." This was a candid and pleasant confession.

"Though he used to censure carelessness with great vehemence, he owned, that he once, to avoid the trouble of locking up five guineas, hid them, he forgot where, so that he could not find them."

"A gentleman who introduced his brother to Dr.

Johnson, was earnest to recommend him to the Doctor's notice, which he did by saying, 'When we have sat together some time, you'll find my brother grow very entertaining.'—'Sir, (said Johnson) I can wait.'"

Johnson, for sport perhaps, or from the spirit of contradiction, eagerly maintained that Derrick had merit as a writer. Mr. Morgann argued with him directly, in vain. At length he had recourse to this device. "Pray, Sir, (said he) whether do you reckon Derrick or Smart the best poet?" Johnson at once felt himself roused; and answered, "Sir, there is no settling the point of precedence between a louse and a flea."

Johnson's love of little children, which he discovered upon all occasions, calling them "pretty dears," and giving them sweetmeats, was an undoubted proof of the real humanity and gentleness of his disposition.

His uncommon kindness to his servants, and serious concern, not only for their comfort in this world, but their happiness in the next, was another unquestionable evidence of what all, who were intimately acquainted with him, knew to be true.

Nor would it be just, under this head, to omit the fondness which he showed for animals which he had taken under his protection. I shall never forget the indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat; for whom he himself used to go out and buy oysters, lest the servants, having that trouble, should take a dislike to the poor creature. I am, unluckily, one of those who have an antipathy to a cat, so that I am uneasy when in the room with one; and I own that I frequently suffered a good deal from the presence of this same Hodge. I recollect him one day scrambling up Dr. Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction, while my friend, smiling and half-whistling, rubbed down his back, and pulled him by the tail; and when I observed he was a fine cat, saying, "Why, yes, Sir, but I have had cats whom I liked better than this;" and then, as if perceiving Hodge to be out of countenance, adding, "But he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed."

This reminds me of the ludicrous account which he gave Mr. Langton of the despicable state of a young gentleman of good family. "Sir, when I heard of him last, he was running about town shooting cats." And then, in a sort of kindly reverie, he bethought himself of his own favourite cat, and said, "But Hodge shan't be shot; no, no, Hodge shall not be shot."

Many instances of his resolution may be mentioned. One day, at Mr. Beauclerk's house in the country, when two large dogs were fighting, he went up to them, and beat them till they separated; and at another time, when told of the danger there was that a gun might burst if charged with many balls, he put in six or seven, and fired it off against a wall. Mr. Langton told me, that when they were swimming together near Oxford, he cautioned Dr. Johnson against a pool, which was reckoned particularly dangerous; upon which Johnson directly swam into it. He told me himself that one night he was attacked in the street by four men, to whom he would not yield, but kept them all at bay, till the watch came up, and carried both him and them to the round-house. In the playhouse at Lichfield, as Mr. Garrick informed me, Johnson having for a moment quitted a chair which was placed for him between the side scenes, a gentleman took possession of it, and, when Johnson on his return civilly demanded his seat, rudely refused to give it up; upon which Johnson laid hold of it, and tossed him and the chair into the pit. Foote, who so successfully revived the old comedy, by exhibiting living characters, had resolved to imitate Johnson on the stage, expecting great profits from his ridicule of so celebrated a man. Johnson being informed of his intention, and being at dinner at Mr. Thomas Davies's, the bookseller, from whom I had the story, he asked Mr. Davies, "what was the common price of an oak stick?" and being answered sixpence, "Why then, Sir," said he, "give me leave to send your servant to purchase me a shilling one. I'll have a double quantity; for I am told Foote means to *take me off*, as he calls it, and I am determined the fellow shall not do it with impunity." Davies took care to acquaint



Foot of this, which effectually checked the wantonness of the mimic.

When Mrs. Siddons came into the room, there happened to be no chair ready for her, which he observing said, with a smile, "Madam, you who so often occasion a want of seats to other people, will the more easily excuse the want of one yourself."

Johnson having argued for some time with a pertinacious gentleman, his opponent, who had talked in a very puzzling manner, happened to say, "I don't understand you, Sir;" upon which Johnson observed, "Sir, I have found you an argument; but I am not obliged to find you an understanding."

What follows is a beautiful specimen of his gentleness and complacency to a young lady, his godchild, one of the daughters of his friend Mr. Langton, then, I think, in her seventh year. He took the trouble to write it in a large round hand nearly resembling printed characters, that she might have the satisfaction of reading it herself. The original lies before me, but shall be faithfully restored to her; and I dare say will be preserved by her as a jewel, as long as she lives.

JOHNSON TO MISS JANE LANGTON,  
*In Rochester, Kent.*

"May 10, 1784.

"MY DEAREST MISS JENNY,

"I am sorry that your pretty letter has been so long without being answered; but, when I am not pretty well, I do not always write plain enough for young ladies. I am glad, my dear, to see that you write so well, and hope that you mind your pen, your book and your needle, for they are all necessary. Your books will give you knowledge, and make you respected; and your needle will find you useful employment when you do not care to read. When you are a little older, I hope you will be very diligent in learning arithmetic; and, above all, that through your whole life you will carefully say your prayers and read your Bible. I am, my dear, your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."



No man was more ready to make an apology when he had censured unjustly than Johnson. When a proof-sheet of one of his works was brought to him, he found fault with the mode in which a part of it was arranged, refused to read it, and in a passion, desired that the compositor might be sent to him. The compositor was Mr. Manning, a decent sensible man, who had composed about one half of his *Dictionary*, when in Mr. Strahan's printing-house; and a great part of his *Lives of the Poets*, when in that of Mr. Nichols; and who (in his seventy-seventh year) when in Mr. Baldwin's printing-house, composed a part of the first edition of this work concerning him. By producing the manuscript, he at once satisfied Dr. Johnson that he was not to blame. Upon which Johnson candidly and earnestly said to him, "Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon; Mr. Compositor, I ask your pardon, again and again."

A gentleman having said that a *congé d'élire* has not, perhaps, the force of a command, but may be considered only as a strong recommendation:—"Sir," replied Johnson, who overheard him, "it is such a recommendation, as if I should throw you out of a two-pair-of-stairs window, and recommend to you to fall soft."

## DEATH OF JOHNSON

[IN 1782 Johnson's ill-health began to increase: in June, 1783, he was struck with a temporary paralysis, and at the end of the year asthma and dropsy attacked him. He recovered sufficiently to go to Oxford in the summer of 1784, but as winter approached he gradually succumbed. His death took place on the 13th of December, and he was buried in Westminster Abbey; a monument stands to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral.]

My readers are now, at last, to behold SAMUEL JOHNSON preparing himself for that doom, from which the most exalted powers afford no exemption to man. Death had always been to him an object of terror: so

that, though by no means happy, he still clung to life with an eagerness at which many have wondered. At any time when he was ill, he was very much pleased to be told that he looked better. An ingenious member of the *Eumelian Club* informs me, that upon one occasion, when he said to him that he saw health returning to his cheek, Johnson seized him by the hand and exclaimed, "Sir, you are one of the kindest friends I ever had."

His own statement of his views of futurity will appear truly rational; and may, perhaps, impress the unthinking with seriousness.

"You know," says he to Mrs. Thrale, "I never thought confidence with respect to futurity any part of the character of a brave, a wise, or a good man. Bravery has no place where it can avail nothing; wisdom impresses strongly the consciousness of those faults, of which it is, perhaps, itself an aggravation; and goodness, always wishing to be better, and imputing every deficiency to criminal negligence, and every fault to voluntary corruption, never dares to suppose the condition of forgiveness fulfilled, nor what is wanting in the crime supplied by penitence.

"This is the state of the best; but what must be the condition of him whose heart will not suffer him to rank himself among the best, or among the good? Such must be his dread of the approaching trial, as will leave him little attention to the opinion of those whom he is leaving for ever; and the serenity that is not felt, it can be no virtue to feign."

It is not my intention to give a very minute detail of the particulars of Johnson's remaining days, of whom it was now evident that the crisis was fast approaching, when he must "*die like men, and fall like one of the princes.*" Yet it will be instructive, as well as gratifying to the curiosity of my readers, to record a few circumstances, on the authenticity of which they may perfectly rely, as I have been at the utmost pains to obtain an accurate account of his last illness, from the best authority.

Dr. Heberden, Dr. Brocklesby, Dr. Warren, and Dr. Butter; physicians, generously attended him, without

accepting any fees, as did Mr. Cruikshank, surgeon; and all that could be done from professional skill and ability was tried, to prolong a life so truly valuable. He himself, indeed, having, on account of his very bad constitution, been perpetually applying himself to medical inquiries, united his own efforts with those of the gentlemen who attended him; and imagining that the dropsical collection of water which oppressed him might be drawn off by making incisions in his body, he, with his usual resolute defiance of pain, cut deep, when he thought that his surgeon had done it too tenderly.

About eight or ten days before his death, when Dr. Brocklesby paid him his morning visit, he seemed very low and desponding, and said, "I have been as a dying man all night." He then emphatically broke out in the words of Shakspeare:—

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;  
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,  
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff,  
Which weighs upon the heart?"

To which Dr. Brocklesby readily answered from the same great poet,—

"————— Therein the patient  
Must minister to himself."

Johnson expressed himself much satisfied with the application.

Having no other relations, it had been for some time Johnson's intention to make a liberal provision for his faithful servant, Mr. Francis Barber, whom he looked upon as particularly under his protection, and whom he had all along treated truly as an humble friend. Having asked Dr. Brocklesby what would be a proper annuity to a favourite servant, and being answered that it must depend on the circumstances of the master; and that in the case of a nobleman fifty pounds a year was considered as an adequate reward for many years' faithful service;—"Then," said Johnson, "shall I be *nobilissimus*, for I mean to leave Frank seventy pounds a year, and I desire you to tell him so." It is strange,

however, to think, that Johnson was not free from that general weakness of being averse to execute a will, so that he delayed it from time to time; and had it not been for Sir John Hawkins's repeatedly urging it, I think it is probable that his kind resolution would not have been fulfilled. After making one, which, as Sir John Hawkins informs us, extended no further than the promised annuity, Johnson's final disposition of his property was established by a Will and Codicil.

The consideration of numerous papers of which he was possessed seems to have struck Johnson's mind with a sudden anxiety; and as they were in great confusion, it is much to be lamented that he had not intrusted some faithful and discreet person with the care and selection of them; instead of which he, in a precipitate manner, burnt large masses of them, with little regard, as I apprehend, to discrimination. Not that I suppose we have thus been deprived of any compositions which he had ever intended for the public eye; but from what escaped the flames I judge that many curious circumstances, relating both to himself and other literary characters, have perished.

Two very valuable articles, I am sure, we have lost, which were two quarto volumes, containing a full, fair, and most particular account of his own life, from his earliest recollection. I owned to him, that having accidentally seen them, I had read a great deal in them; and apologizing for the liberty I had taken, asked him, if I could help it. He placidly answered, "Why, Sir, I do not think you could have helped it." I said that I had, for once in my life, felt half an inclination to commit theft. It had come into my mind to carry off those two volumes, and never see him more. Upon my inquiring how this would have affected him, "Sir," said he, "I believe I should have gone mad."

During his last illness Johnson experienced the steady and kind attachment of his numerous friends. Mr. Hoole has drawn up a narrative of what passed in the visits which he paid him during that time, from the 10th of November to the 13th of December, the day of his death, inclusive, and has favoured me with a perusal



of it, with permission to make extracts, which I have done.

Nobody was more attentive to him than Mr. Langton, to whom he tenderly said, *Te teneam moriens deficiente manu*. And I think it highly to the honour of Mr. Windham, that his important occupations as an active statesman did not prevent him from paying assiduous respect to the dying Sage whom he revered. Mr. Langton informs me, that "one day he found Mr. Burke and four or five more friends sitting with Johnson. Mr. Burke said to him, 'I am afraid, Sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you.'—'No, Sir,' said Johnson, 'it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state indeed when your company would not be a delight to me.' Mr. Burke, in a tremulous voice, expressive of being very tenderly affected, replied, 'My dear Sir, you have always been too good to me.' Immediately afterwards he went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquaintance of these two eminent men."

The following particulars of his conversation within a few days of his death I give on the authority of Mr. John Nichols.

"Of his friend Cave he always spoke with great affection. 'Yet,' said he, 'Cave (who never looked out of his window but with a view to the *Gentleman's Magazine*) was a penurious paymaster; he would contract for lines by the hundred, and expect the long hundred; but he was a good man, and always delighted to have his friends at his table.'

"When talking of a regular edition of his own works, he said that he had power (from the booksellers) to print such an edition, if his health admitted it; but had no power to assign over any edition, unless he could add notes, and so alter them as to make them new works; which his state of health forbade him to think of. 'I may possibly live,' said he, 'or rather breathe, three days, or perhaps three weeks; but find myself daily and gradually weaker.'

"He said at another time, three or four days only before his death, speaking of the little fear he had of undergoing a chirurgical operation, 'I would give one

of these legs for a year more of life, I mean of comfortable life, not such as that which I now suffer;—and lamented much his inability to read during his hours of restlessness. ‘I used formerly,’ he added, ‘when sleepless in bed, *to read like a Turk.*’

“Whilst confined by his last illness, it was his regular practice to have the church service read to him by some attentive and friendly divine. The Rev. Mr. Hoole performed this kind office in my presence for the last time, when, by his own desire, no more than the Litany was read; in which his responses were in the deep and sonorous voice which Mr. Boswell has occasionally noticed, and with the most profound devotion that can be imagined. His hearing not being quite perfect, he, more than once interrupted Mr. Hoole with, ‘Louder, my dear Sir, louder, I entreat you, or you pray in vain!’—and, when the service was ended, he, with great earnestness, turned round to an excellent lady who was present, saying, ‘I thank you, Madam, very heartily, for your kindness in joining me in this solemn exercise. Live well, I conjure you; and you will not feel the compunction at the last which I now feel.’ So truly humble were the thoughts which this great and good man entertained of his own approaches to religious perfection.”

Amidst the melancholy clouds which hung over the dying Johnson, his characteristical manner showed itself on different occasions.

When Dr. Warren, in his usual style, hoped that he was better, his answer was, “No, Sir; you cannot conceive with what acceleration I advance towards death.”

A man whom he had never seen before was employed one night to sit up with him. Being asked next morning how he liked his attendant, his answer was, “Not at all, Sir; the fellow’s an idiot; he is as awkward as a turnspit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse.”

Mr. Windham having placed a pillow conveniently to support him, he thanked him for his kindness, and said, “That will do—all that a pillow can do.”

As he opened a note which his servant brought to him, he said, "An odd thought strikes me:—we shall receive no letters in the grave."

He requested three things of Sir Joshua Reynolds:—To forgive him thirty pounds which he had borrowed of him;—to read the Bible;—and never to use his pencil on a Sunday. Sir Joshua readily acquiesced.

Johnson, with that native fortitude which, amidst all his bodily distress and mental sufferings, never forsook him, asked Dr. Brocklesby, as a man in whom he had confidence, to tell him plainly whether he could recover. "Give me," said he, "a direct answer." The doctor, having first asked him if he could bear the whole truth, which way soever it might lead, and being answered that he could, declared that, in his opinion, he could not recover without a miracle, "Then," said Johnson, "I will take no more physic, not even my opiates; for I have prayed that I may render up my soul to God unclouded." In this resolution he persevered, and, at the same time, used only the weakest kinds of sustenance. Being pressed by Mr. Windham to take somewhat more generous nourishment, lest too low a diet should have the very effect which he dreaded, by debilitating his mind, he said, "I will take any thing but inebriating sustenance."

Of his last moments, my brother, Thomas David, has furnished me with the following particulars:—

"The Doctor, from the time that he was certain his death was near, appeared to be perfectly resigned, was seldom or never fretful or out of temper, and often said to his faithful servant, who gave me this account, 'Attend, Francis, to the salvation of your soul, which is the object of greatest importance:' he also explained to him passages in the Scripture, and seemed to have pleasure in talking upon religious subjects.

"On Monday, the 13th of December, the day on which he died, a Miss Morris, daughter to a particular friend of his, called, and said to Francis, that she begged to be permitted to see the Doctor, that she might earnestly request him to give her his blessing. Francis went into the room, followed by the young

lady, and delivered the message. The Doctor turned himself in the bed, and said, 'God bless you, my dear!' These were the last words he spoke. His difficulty of breathing increased till about seven o'clock in the evening, when Mr. Barber and Mrs. Desmoulins, who were sitting in the room, observing that the noise he had made in breathing had ceased, went to the bed, and found he was dead."





## NOTES.

Boswell's own notes are marked B., Malone's M., Croker's C., Birkbeck Hill's H.  
By N.E.D. is signified the New English Dictionary.

1. **N.S.**, New Style. The calendar was reformed in England by dropping out eleven days between the 2nd and the 14th September, 1752. This was largely the work of the E. of Chesterfield.

2. **my grandfather Hammond.** This story was communicated to Boswell by a Miss Mary Adye of Lichfield.

3. **kennel**, the drain or gutter.

5. **the black letter**, a particular style of printed characters known as the 'Gothic' or 'Old English.'

6. **one of Shakspeare's lines**, varied more than a little. The line is in *King Henry VI.*, Part II. IV. x., "Sword, I will hallow thee for this thy deed."—M.

9. **a commoner**, lit. 'one who pays for his commons.' The colleges were originally intended only for the fellows and scholars 'on the foundation,' the admission of other students as 'commoners' or boarders being a subsequent development which eventuated in the recognition of many ranks of students, as (at Oxford) noblemen, gentlemen-commoners, fellow-commoners, commoners, battelers, servitors. These grades are now practically obsolete.—N. E. D.

in his nineteenth year, he was in his twentieth year.

10. **the speech of the Ghost.** *Hamlet*, I. v.

11. **an Athenian blockhead**, a scholar who is a blockhead.  
**a nest of singing-birds.** Francis Beaumont and Shenstone had also been educated at Pembroke College.

12. **res angusta domi.** Juvenal, *Sat.* iii. 165, poverty at home.  
**little more than three years.** Some editors adopt the theory that Boswell is here wrong, and that Johnson was at Oxford but little more than a year.

14. **He also wore his hair**, his own hair and not a wig.

**Though Mrs. Porter was double the age of Johnson.** Mrs. Porter was 46 and Johnson two months short of 26.

17. Ofellus. Horace, *Sat.* II. ii. 2.

coffee-house. In the 17th and 18th centuries these places were much frequented for the purpose of political and literary conversation, circulation of news, etc.—N.E.D.

18. his tragedy, Irene.

the King's library, afterwards given by George IV. to the British Museum.

19. gave the world assurance of the man. Shakspeare, *Hamlet*, III. iv. 62.

21. Horace. Pope had published *Imitations of Horace*.—H.

22. déterré, unearthed.

23. the decision of the House of Commons. "In 1770 he published a political pamphlet entitled *The False Alarm*, intended to justify the conduct of the ministry and their majority in the House of Commons for having virtually assumed it as an axiom that the expulsion of a Member of Parliament was equivalent to exclusion."—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.

unconstitutional taxation of our fellow-subjects. In 1775 he published *Taxation no Tyranny; an Answer to the Resolutions and Address of the American Congress*. "He had long before indulged most unfavourable sentiments of our fellow-subjects in America. . . . I was told . . . he had said of them, 'Sir, they are a race of convicts, and ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging.'"—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.

25. a Welsh gentleman. Thomas Richards published in 1753 *Antiquae Linguae Britannicae Thesaurus*, to which is prefixed a Welsh grammar and a collection of British proverbs.—H.

from another pen. See Sir John Hawkins's *Life of Johnson*.—B.

prior lexicographers. One of these was Edward Philips, a nephew and pupil of Milton; in 1657 he published *The New World of Words*.

26. a club in Ivy Lane. Dr. Richard Bathurst, Mr. Hawkesworth, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) John Hawkins were members.

27. the nine years of Horace. Horace, *Ars Poet.* 388

"let them (your writings) not come forth

Till the ninth ripening year mature their worth."—Francis.

28. Mahomet was, in fact, played by Mr. Barry.—B.

his three nights' profit, the profits of the third, sixth, and ninth nights amounted to £195 10s.

genus irritabile. Horace, *Epistles*, II. ii. 102, the fretful tribe.

29. Green Room, a room in a theatre provided for the accommodation of actors and actresses when not required on the stage: probably so called because it was originally painted green.—N.E.D.

32. a grant of free-warren, a right granted by royal charter of hunting certain beasts or birds to the exclusion of any other person.

33. the Round-house, a constable's prison; so called from its shape

33. a line of Pope.  
 "Blends in exception to all general rules,  
 Your taste of follies with our scorn of fools."  
*Moral Essays*, ii. 275.—H.
34. that liquor called **Bishop**, a mixture of wine, oranges, and sugar.  
 the festive lines. Mr. Langton recollected, or Dr. Johnson  
 repeated the passage wrong. The lines are in Lord Lansdowne's  
*Drinking Song to Sleep*, and run thus:  
 "Short, very short, be then thy reign,  
 For I'm in haste to laugh and drink again."—B.
- You'll be in the **Chronicle**. The *Chronicle* was a collection of  
 miscellaneous news, containing amongst other things reports of crimes.
37. the shepherd in Virgil. *Eclogues*, viii. 43-45.
40. **Windward** and **Leeward** are both defined 'towards the wind.'  
**Network**. 'Anything reticulated or decussated, at equal distances,  
 with interstices between the intersections.'
- Tory**. '(A cant term derived, I suppose, from an Irish word  
 signifying a savage.) One who adheres to the ancient constitution of  
 the State, and the apostolical hierarchy of the Church of England;  
 opposed to a *Whig*.'
- Whig**. 'The name of a faction.'
- Pension**. 'An allowance made to anyone without an equivalent.  
 In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a State  
 hireling for treason to his country.'
- Oats**. 'A grain which in England is generally given to horses,  
 but in Scotland supports the people.'
- Excise**. 'A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged  
 not by the common judges of property but wretches hired by those to  
 whom excise is paid.'
44. a sufferer in the cause of government. On March 2nd, 1754  
 (not 1753), "the audience called for a repetition of some lines which  
 they applied against the Government. Diggs, the actor, refused by the  
 order of Sheridan, the manager, to repeat them; Sheridan would not  
 even appear on the stage to justify the prohibition. In an instant the  
 audience demolished the inside of the house and reduced it to a shell."—  
*Walpole's Reign of George II.*, i. 389, and *Gent. Mag.*, xxiv. 141.—H.
- Look, my lord, it comes. Shakspeare, *Hamlet*, i. iv. 38.
48. *Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit*. See his epitaph in Westminster  
 Abbey written by Dr. Johnson.—B. Everything he touched he  
 adorned.
- un étourdi*, a feather-brain.
49. he was seriously angry. The air of solemnity which Goldsmith  
 assumed to heighten his drollery was often, as here, misinterpreted.  
 the *Fantoccini*, puppets. He went home with Mr. Burke to  
 supper; and broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company  
 how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets.—B.



a brother who was Dean of Durham. I am willing to hope that there may have been some mistake as to this anecdote, though I had it from a dignitary of the church. Dr. Isaac Goldsmith, his near relation, was Dean of Cloyne in 1747.—B.

51. when he was in the isle of Sky. "The day that we left Talisker, he bade us ride on. He then turned the head of his horse back towards Talisker, stopped for some time; then wheeled round to the same direction with ours, and then came briskly after us."—Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, Oct. 12th.

53. the library at the Queen's house. "Buckingham House bought in 1761 by George III., and settled on Queen Charlotte. The present Buckingham Palace occupies the site." P. Cunningham.—H.

55. the controversy between Warburton and Lowth. In Gibbon's memoirs a fine passage is quoted from Lowth's *Defence of the University of Oxford* against Warburton's reproaches. "I transcribe with pleasure this eloquent passage," writes Gibbon, "without inquiring whether in this angry controversy the spirit of Lowth himself is purified from the intolerant zeal which Warburton had ascribed to the genius of the place."—Gibbon's *Misc. Works*, i. 47.—H.

59. Zimri is the D. of Buckingham in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Pope's character of Addison, *Prologue to the Satires*, 193.

The Mourning Bride.

*Almeria*. "No, all is hushed and still as death,—'Tis dreadful!  
How reverend is the face of this tall pile,  
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads  
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof  
By its own weight made stedfast and immoveable,  
Looking tranquillity! It strikes an awe  
And terror on my aching sight; the tombs  
And monumental caves of death look cold  
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.  
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;  
Nay, quickly speak to me, and let me hear  
Thy voice—my own affrights me with its echoes."

*The Mourning Bride*, II. iii.

the god of his idolatry.

"If thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,  
Which is the god of my idolatry."

Shakspeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, II. ii. 113.

the battle of Agincourt. *Henry V.*, IV. Prologue.

the speech of Juliet. *Romeo and Juliet*, IV. iii.

60. the description of Dover Cliff. *King Lear*, IV. vi. 11.

61. the author of a modern tragedy, probably Jephson, author of *Braganza*, which appeared . . . in 1775, to which date the anecdote belongs.—C.

62. *Exceptio probat regulam*, the exception tests the rule; here, as commonly, in the sense, the exception proves the rule.

64. the Grand Signor, the Sultan.
65. there are places for them. Bedlam (the name is a cockney contraction for Bethlehem Hospital) was close to Moorfields, and looked on the present Finsbury Circus.
- extra scandulum, without offence.
67. the ten persecutions. "The celebrated number of *ten* persecutions has been determined by the ecclesiastical writers of the fifth century, who possessed a more distinct view of the prosperous or adverse fortunes of the church from the age of Nero to that of Diocletian. The ingenious parallels of the *ten* plagues of Egypt and of the *ten* horns of the Apocalypse first suggested this calculation to their minds."—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.
69. pars magna fui. Virgil, *Aeneid*, ii. 5. I bore no small a part.
70. mine own friend and my father's friend. *Proverbs*, XXVII. 10.
71. his patriotic friends. In the fourth edition of his *Dictionary* Johnson introduced a second definition of patriot: "It is sometimes used for a factious disturber of the government."—H.
72. indifferent in his choice to go or stay. "Indifferent in his choice to sleep or die." Addison's *Cato*, v. i.—H.
- Gretna, a parish in Scotland just across the border, much frequented by runaway couples, on account of its nearness and the liberality of the Scotch marriage laws.
74. surly virtue.  
 "How when competitors like these contend,  
 Can surly virtue hope to fix a friend."  
 Johnson, *London, A Poem*, 145.—B.
75. he will play scrub all his life. Scrub, a character in Farquhar's *Beaux' Stratagem*, thus describes his duties: "Of a Monday I drive the coach, of a Tuesday I drive the plough, on Wednesday I follow the hounds, a Thursday I dun the tenants, on Friday I go to market, on Saturday I draw warrants, and a Sunday I draw beer."
76. Birnam-wood. *Macbeth*, v. iv.  
 Milton's remark. *L'Allegro*, 36.
77. Off with his head! Colley Cibber's acting version *Richard III.*, iv. i. "Off with his head! So much for Buckingham."—H.
- in meditatione fugae, meditating flight.
78. Diabolus regis, the king's demon, or familiar spirit.  
 Mortimer. Wilkes ironically dedicated Ben Jonson's play *The Fall of Mortimer* to the E. of Bute.
- corps diplomatique, the diplomatic body.
80. Metaphysical Poets, certain poets of the seventeenth century, e.g. Donne, Cowley, who strained after witty conceits and far-fetched images. "They left not only reason but fancy behind them, and produced combinations of confused magnificence that not only could

not be credited but could not be imagined." Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*. The term metaphysical was first applied to them by Johnson, and in this connection means outside the laws of nature.

81. fallen on evil days. *Paradise Lost*, VII. 25.

82. any asperity of reproach, in his political controversies.

con amore, with love.

86. the sibyl, the name given in antiquity to inspired prophetesses; the most famous was the Cumaean Sibyl.—Virgil, *Aeneid*, VI. 10.

the Augustan age, *i.e.* the period of highest purity and refinement of a national literature, as was the age of Augustus; in English literature generally applied to the period covered by the reign of Queen Anne.

Eheu fugaces Postume, Postume, | Labuntur anni.—Horace, *Odes*, II. xiv. 1. Alas, Postumus, the fleeting years slip away.

87. an Irish degree. In 1739 Pope recommended Johnson to Earl Gower, who endeavoured to procure for him a degree from Dublin, by writing a letter to a friend of Swift's.

90. his active benevolence. "I shall never forget the impression I felt in Dr. Johnson's favour, the first time I was in his company, on his saying that as he returned to his lodgings at one or two o'clock in the morning he often saw poor children asleep on thresholds and stalls, and that he used to put pennies into their hands to buy them a breakfast." Miss Reynolds' Recollections.—C.

96. a congé d'élire, the name given to the king's permission to a dean and chapter to elect a bishop. Since Henry VIII.'s time the name of the person to be elected has always accompanied the permission.

97. the Eumelian Club. A Club in London, founded by the learned and ingenious physician, Dr. Ash, in honour of whose name it was called Eumelian from the Greek.—B.

98. the words of Shakspeare. *Macbeth*, V. iii. 40.

100. Te teneam moriens deficiente manu. Tibullus, *Elegies*, I. i. 60.

## BIOGRAPHIES.

THESE biographies only amplify the text; if nothing of value can be added to what is found there, the name will not be found below.

**dams, Dr. William** (1706-1789), a tutor and eventually Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, where he formed a lasting friendship with Johnson.

**Addison, Joseph** (1672-1719), essayist, poet, and statesman; his chief works are his essays in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* and his tragedy *Cato*.

**Alexander the Great**, king of Macedonia and conqueror of the East, died in Babylon 323 B.C. at the age of 32.

**Anacreon**, a celebrated lyric poet, born at Teos in Asia Minor in the sixth century before Christ.

**Argyle, Archibald D. of** (1682-1761), was entrusted by Walpole with the chief management of Scotch affairs; his influence was so great that he was nicknamed King of Scotland.

**Aristotle** (384-322 B.C.), a Greek philosopher, the tutor of Alexander the Great; he wrote books on logic, metaphysics, ethics, politics, and poetry.

**Augustus** (63 B.C.-14 A.D.), the first Roman emperor; in his reign flourished Virgil, Livy, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, and other writers.

**Baldwin, Henry**, printer of the *Life of Johnson*, and Master of the Worshipful Company of Stationers.

**Barber, Francis**, a negro who entered Johnson's service in 1752; Johnson sent him to school at Bishop Stortford and made him his chief legatee; see Bathurst.

**Barrington, Daines** (1727-1800), a lawyer and naturalist. In the *Old Benchers* Lamb refers to him as 'another oddity.'

**Barry, Spranger** (1719-1777), an actor noted for his fine figure and mellifluous voice; he was a rival of David Garrick.

**Bathurst, Dr. Richard** (d. 1762), born in Jamaica, the son of Colonel Bathurst who brought Francis Barber to England. He studied medicine, became an army surgeon, and died in an expedition against Havannah.



**Baxter, Richard** (1615-1691), a presbyterian divine and the author of the *Saints' Everlasting Rest*.

**Beauclerk, Topham** (1739-1780), the grandson of the first Duke of St. Albans, and the possessor of a fine library of 30,000 volumes.

**Bentley, Richard** (1662-1742), the greatest classical scholar that England has produced; he discovered the digamma, and proved the *Letters of Phalaris* spurious; he was Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, from 1700-1742.

**Bickerstaff, Isaac**, a dramatic writer, born in Ireland about 1735.

**Blair, Dr. Hugh** (1718-1800), a friend of Hume; his sermons enjoyed great popularity and were translated into many languages.

**Boileau, Nicolas** (1636-1711), author of *Satires* (the first being the *Farewell of a Poet to Paris*) and of *The Art of Poetry*.

**Boswell, Thomas David**, "a brother of Boswell's, a Spanish merchant, whom the war has driven from his residence at Valencia. . . . He is a very agreeable man and speaks no Scotch."—Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, 1780.

**Brocklesby, Dr. Richard** (1722-1797), had a large practice in the Strand. He was remarkably generous, making Burke a present of £1000, and offering Johnson £100 a year for life.

**Brown, Tom.** "I have just succeeded in revealing the identity of 'Tom Brown,' who followed Mrs. Oliver as Johnson's instructor in English, and who as Boswell records, 'published a spelling book and dedicated it to the UNIVERSE.' He was Thomas Browne, a Lichfield shoemaker, who turned schoolmaster, and died in August, 1717, the year of Johnson's entering Lichfield School. Browne was associated with the Olivers, who also were shoemakers. He was not exactly a poor man, yet after his death no literature was found in his house except 'a parcel of old books' in the *kitchen*, valued at five shillings; and the school-room contained nothing but one table and an old chair. With such an economy of apparatus are great men usually fashioned."—Aleyn Lyell Reade.

**Burke, Edmund** (1729-1797), statesman, orator, and author of *A Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful*, *Reflections on the French Revolution*; he was the prime mover in the foundation of the Literary Club.

**Burney, Dr. Charles** (1726-1814), a musician and author. His daughter was Fanny Burney (afterwards Madame D'Arbly), authoress of *Evelina*.

**Bute, E. of** (1713-1792), a favourite minister of George III.

**Cave, Edward** (1691-1754), purchased a printing office in 1731 and started the *Gentleman's Magazine* under the name Sylvanus Urban. Johnson says its sale was over ten thousand in 1739.

**Charles III.** (1720-1788), grandson of James II.

**Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, E. of** (1694-1773), Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Secretary of State; author of the famous *Letters*.

- Cibber, Colley** (1671-1757), an actor and author of various plays; appointed poet laureate in 1730; he wrote an autobiography—*An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*.
- Cibber, Mrs.** (1714-1766), wife of Theophilus Cibber, son of Colley Cibber; she was famous for her fine voice and her tragic acting.
- Clarke, Samuel** (1675-1729), published various theological works and edited Caesar and Homer's *Iliad*.
- Claxton**, probably John Claxton, F.A.S., author of a paper in *Archæologia*.—C.
- Colman, George** (1732-1794), dramatist, and a manager of Covent Garden Theatre, where he produced Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*.
- Congreve, William** (1670-1729), author of *The Mourning Bride* and of four brilliant comedies.
- Cowley, Abraham** (1618-1667), author of *Essays* and *Pindaric Odes*.
- Craddock, Joseph** (1742-1826), a patron of the London stage and author of *Literary Memoirs*, and of "*Zobeide*, a tragedy; a very pleasing gentleman."—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.
- Croft, Herbert** (1751-1816), a barrister and clergyman; in 1793 he planned a new edition of Johnson's *Dictionary*, but could not proceed for want of subscribers.
- Cruikshank, William Cumberland** (1745-1800), a famous anatomist.
- Davies, Thomas** (about 1712-1785), a bookseller and actor; his wife was noted for her beauty.
- Delaney, Patrick** (about 1685-1768), a divine and a friend of Swift's, who appointed him one of his executors.
- Derrick, Samuel** (1724-1769), an Irishman and an unsuccessful actor who turned to literature; he succeeded Beau Nash as Master of the Ceremonies at Bath.
- Desmoulins, Mrs.**, widow of a writing-master and an inmate of Johnson's house; Johnson allowed her half-a-guinea a week.
- Dilly, John** (1731-1806), the eldest of three brothers; he had no connection with the business but lived on the family property at Southill, where he was visited by Johnson and Boswell in 1781.
- Dilly, Edward** (1732-1779), and **Dilly, Charles** (1739-1807), were brothers of John Dilly. They had a large business in the Poultry; amongst other books they published Boswell's *Account of Corsica*, *Tour to the Hebrides*, and the *Life of Johnson*. Their hospitality was famous.
- Dodsley, James** (1724-1797), bookseller and partner with Dodsley, Robert (1703-1764), footman, dramatist and bookseller.
- Dominicetti**, an Italian quack who in 1765 established medicated baths in Cheney Walk, Chelsea.—C.
- Dormer Philip, E.** of Chesterfield, see Chesterfield, E. of.
- Douglas, John** (1721-1807), Bishop of Salisbury; he attacked Hume's argument on miracles in a book called the *Criterion*.

**Dryden, John** (1631-1700), poet laureate 1670, wrote about fourteen plays between 1668 and 1681; published *Absalom and Achitophel*, 1681; *The Medal*, *Mac Flecknoe*, and *Religio Laici*, 1682; *The Hind and the Panther*, 1687; in 1689 he was deprived of the laureateship; translated Virgil and wrote *Alexander's Feast*, 1697; produced *Fables Ancient and Modern*, 1700.

**Elwal, Mr.** "Mr. Elwal was, I think an ironmonger at Wolverhampton and he had a mind to make himself famous by being the founder of a new sect. . . . To try to make himself distinguished he wrote a letter to King George II. challenging him to dispute with him, in which he said, 'George, if you be afraid to come by yourself to dispute with a poor old man, you may bring a thousand of your black-guards with you; and if you should still be afraid, you may bring a thousand of your red-guards.'"—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, 1772.

**Euripides** (480-406 B.C.), the third great Attic tragedian; 18 of his plays are extant.

**Ferguson, James** (1710-1776), astronomer and inventor of astronomical instruments.

**Fitzherbert, William** (1748-1791), gentleman-usher to George III. and the author of *Maxims*.

**Floyer, Sir John** (1649-1734), physician, wrote works on bathing and asthma; was the first to make regular observations on the rate of the pulse.

**Foote, Samuel** (1720-1777), actor and dramatist, built the new Haymarket, 1767; he was a better mimic than actor.

**Ford, Sarah**, married Michael Johnson, 1706, and died in 1759. To her Johnson wrote, "You have been the best mother and, I believe, the best woman in the world."

**Garrick, David** (1717-1779), started a wine business in London; appeared first on the stage at Ipswich, and made his reputation in *Richard III.*, 1741; he made a larger fortune than any actor except Alleyn.

**Garrick, George** (1723-1779), acted as his brother's secretary.

**Gentleman, Francis** (1728-1784), an actor and dramatist.

**Goldsmith, Dr. Oliver** (1728-1774), ran away from Trinity College, Dublin; wandered for about a year in France, Switzerland, and Italy; is said to have taken a medical degree at Louvain or Padua; author of two good comedies *The Good-natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*; *The Deserted Village*, 1770; *Animated Nature*, 1774.

**Gower, Lord**, see Leveson-Gower.

**Gray, Thomas** (1716-1771), classical scholar, linguist, and poet, buried at Stoke Poges; he is best known by his *Elegy* and *Odes*.

**Hammond**, see note.

**Hawkesworth, John** (about 1715-1773), editor of Swift's works, published an account of voyages in the South Seas, 1773, when he became a director of the East India Company.

**Hawkins, Sir John** (1719–1789), became known to Johnson through his connection with *The Gentleman's Magazine*; he drew up Johnson's will and wrote a *Life of Johnson*, 1787–9.

**Heberden, Dr. William** (1710–1801), practised in London from 1748, and attended Johnson, Cowper, and Warburton.

**Hector, Edmund** (d. 1794), Johnson's school-fellow and friend; he was a leading surgeon in Birmingham.

**Hervey, Henry.** The Honourable Henry Hervey, third son of the first Earl of Bristol, quitted the army and took orders. He married a sister of Sir Thomas Aston, by whom he got the Aston estate, and assumed the name and arms of that family. *Vide* Collins's Peerage.—B.

**Hesiod**, an early Greek poet, author of the *Works and Days*, a picture of daily life in Boeotia.

**Hill, John** (about 1716–1775), an author and quack doctor; for his *Vegetable System* he received a Swedish Order and styled himself Sir John Hill. Garrick made the following epigram on him:

“For physic and farces his equal there scarce is,  
His farces are physic, his physic a farce is.”

**Hitch, Charles**, a bookseller and publisher of considerable note.—C.

**Homer**, the great epic poet of Greece, traditional author of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

**Hoole, Rev. Mr.** In his will Johnson left him and others a book of his own selection.

**Horace** (65–8 B.C.), a friend of Maecenas and Virgil; author of *Odes*, *Satires*, and *Epistles*.

**Hunter**, a prebendary in the Cathedral of Lichfield, and grandfather to Miss Seward.—C.

**Johnson, Michael** (d. 1731), served the offices of churchwarden, sheriff, junior bailiff, and senior bailiff.

**Johnson, Nathaniel** (d. 1737), succeeded his father in the book-selling business.

**Johnson, Mrs.** (i) see Ford, Sarah.

(ii) see Porter, Mrs.

**Jorden, Rev. William.** “He (Johnson) had a love and respect for Jorden, not for his literature, but for his worth. ‘Whenever (said he) a young man becomes Jorden’s pupil, he becomes his son.’”—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.

**Junius, Francis** (1589–1667), philologist and antiquary; his *Etymologicon Anglicanum* (first printed 1743) was largely used by Johnson.

**Juvenal**, a Roman satiric poet who wrote about 115 A.D.

**Ketch, John**, commonly known as Jack Ketch (d. 1686), executioner, was notorious for his excessive barbarity; he executed Lord Russell and Monmouth.



**Knowles, Mrs. Mary** (1733-1807), quakeress, née Morris, was remarkable for her pictures in needlework.

**Langton, Bennet** (1737-1801), was famous for his Greek scholarship. Mrs. Thrale described him as "high, shy, and dry."

**Langton, Miss Jane**, daughter of Bennet Langton.

**Langton, Stephen** (d. 1228), Archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal.

**Lee, Arthur**, was at this time [the dinner in 1776] employed by Congress as "a private and confidential agent in England." Dr. Franklin had arranged for letters to be sent to him, not by post, but by private hand under cover to his brother, **Mr. Alderman Lee**.—*Franklin's Memoirs*, ii. 42, and iii. 415.—H.

**Leland, Thomas** (1722-1785), published a *History of Philip, King of Macedon*, 1758, and a *History of Ireland from the Invasion of Henry II., with a preliminary Discourse on the ancient state of that Kingdom*, 1773.

**Lettsom, John Coakley** (1744-1815), physician, first practised in London in 1770; he wrote medical, biographical, and philanthropical works.

**Leveson-Gower, John** (d. 1754). Lord Gower, after a long opposition to the Whig ministry (which was looked upon as equivalent to Jacobitism) accepted in 1742 the office of Privy Seal.—C. In 1745 he raised a troop for King George.

**Levett, Robert** (about 1701-1782), was an inmate of Johnson's house from 1763; he had some practice as a surgeon in London.

**Longinus**, a distinguished Greek philosopher and grammarian of the third century of our era; the treatise *On the Sublime* used to be attributed to him.

**Longman, Thomas** (1699-1755), founder of the publishing house of Longman; his nephew Thomas Longman entered into partnership with him in 1753.

**Louis XIV.** (1638-1715).

**Lowe**, afterwards Canon of Windsor.

**Lowth, Robert** (1710-1787), Bishop of Oxford, 1766-1777, when he was appointed Bishop of London; he wrote a life of William Wykeham and a short introduction to English Grammar.

**Lyttelton, George, Lord** (1709-1773), a friend of Pope and a patron of literature; author of *Dialogues of the Dead*, 1760.

**Macaulay, Mrs. Catharine** (1731-1791); her *History of England from the Accession of James I. to that of the Brunswick Line* was produced from 1763-1783.

**Malone, Edmund** (1741-1812), critic and author; edited Shakspeare, 1790, and saw four editions of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* through the press.

**Mansfield, Lord** (1733-1821), lord chief-justice of common pleas.

**Mayo, Henry** (1733-1793), a dissenting minister, pastor of a church in Wapping; known as the "Literary Anvil."

**Millar, Andrew** (1707-1768), published Johnson's *Dictionary*, Thomson's *Seasons*, Fielding's works, and the histories of Robertson and Hume.

**Milton, John** (1608-1674).

**Montagu, Mrs. Elizabeth** (1720-1800), contributed three dialogues to Lyttelton's *Dialogues of the Dead* and attacked Voltaire in *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakspeare*. She was a "blue-stocking." "About this time [1781] it was much the fashion for several ladies to have evening assemblies, where the fair sex might participate in conversation with literary and ingenious men. . . . One of the most eminent members of those societies . . . was Mr. Stillingfleet . . . and in particular it was observed that he wore blue stockings. Such was the excellence of his conversation, that his absence was felt as so great a loss that it used to be said, "We can do nothing without these blue stockings"; and thus by degrees the title was established."—Boswell, *Life of Johnson*.

**Morgann, Maurice** (1726-1802), under-secretary of state, 1782, and author of an *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff*.

**Morris, Miss**, sister of a lady of the same name who appeared on the stage at Covent Garden as *Juliet* in 1768, and died next year. She was a relative of a Mr. Corbyn Morris, commissioner of the customs.—C.

**Murphy, Arthur** (1727-1805), an author and actor; edited Fielding's works and wrote an *Essay on the Life and Genius of Samuel Johnson*, 1792.

**Nichols, John** (1745-1826), a printer and author; helped in the management of the *Gentleman's Magazine* and published an edition of Swift's works in 1801.

**Ogilvie, John** (1733-1813), a presbyterian divine who published poems and apologetic treatises.

**Oldham, John** (1653-1683), a poet praised by Waller and Dryden; published several Pindaric Odes and imitations of Horace and other Latin writers.

**Oliver, Dame**, see **Brown, Tom**.

**Orrery, E. of, John Boyle** (1707-1762), a friend of Swift, Pope, and Johnson; author of *Remarks on Swift* and of a translation of Pliny's *Letters*.

**Pearce, Dr.**, Bishop of Rochester, see **Rochester, Bishop of**.

**Petrarch, Francesco** (1304-1374), an Italian poet, the friend of Boccaccio and the inaugurator of the Renaissance in Italy.

**Pindar**, the greatest lyric poet of Greece, born about 522 B.C. Besides triumphal odes for winners in the games he wrote paeans, dithyrambs, and dirges.

**Piozzi, Hester Lynch** (1741-1821), was married in 1762 against her inclinations to Henry Thrale; became an intimate friend of Dr. Johnson, who had a special room at their house at Streatham; after Thrale's death she married Gabriel Piozzi (1784) and went with him to Italy, where she wrote her *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson*. She returned to England, and in 1795 settled down in N. Wales, where she spent the remainder of her days.

**Polybius** (about 204-122 B.C.), wrote a history of Rome from 264-164 B.C. The first five books and extracts from the other thirty-five are extant.

**Pope, Alexander** (1688-1744), published anonymously in 1711 his *Essay on Criticism*; became known to the Addison circle; published the *Rape of the Lock* and the *Dunciad* 1712; issued the first volume of the translation of the *Iliad* in 1715 (completed 1720), and the *Odyssey* 1725-6; wrote the *Essay on Man* 1733.

**Porter, Mrs.** (1688, 9-1752), her maiden name was Jarvis; she brought Johnson seven or eight hundred pounds, a great part of which was expended in fitting up the school at Edial.

**Porter, Miss Lucy**, was born in 1715, being only six years younger than her stepfather; her brother, a captain in the navy, left her a fortune of ten thousand pounds with part of which she built herself a house in Lichfield.

**Pringle, Sir John** (1707-1782), physician, settled in London 1748; in 1772 he was elected President of the Royal Society; and in 1774 was appointed physician to George III.

**Pritchard, Hannah** (1711-1768), played at Drury Lane from 1734-1740 in a wide range of characters, chiefly comic; she was held the greatest Lady Macbeth of her day.

**Ray, John** (1627-1705), the father of the science of natural history in this country.

**Reynolds, Sir Joshua** (1723-1792), the great portrait painter and the author of *Discourses on Painting*; he was chosen as president of the Royal Academy on its foundation in 1768.

**Richardson, Samuel** (1689-1761), started in business in London as a printer; he wrote *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*.

**Rochester, Bishop of, Dr. Pearce** (1690-1774), published theological and classical works.

**Sacheverel, Henry** (about 1674-1724), a popular political preacher, who favoured non-resistance and condemned toleration.

**Savage, Richard** (1697-1743), a poet and friend of Steele and Johnson, the author of several plays; he died in great poverty.

**Shakspeare** (1564-1616).

**Sheridan, Thomas** (1719-1788), actor, lecturer on elocution, and author; the father of Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

**siddons, Mrs. Sarah** (1755-1831), the celebrated actress. When she was engaged by Garrick in 1775 at Drury Lane, she failed, but on her re-engagement in 1782, she was a signal success.

**Skinner, Stephen** (1623-1667), a Lincoln physician and the author of *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae*.

**Smalbroke, Dr. Richard**, second son of Bishop Smalbroke, whose family were long connected with Lichfield; he died the senior member of the College of Advocates.—C.

**Smart, Christopher** (1722-1771), a poet whose one great work, *A Song to David*, was written in a madhouse, where he was visited by Johnson.

**Smith, Dr. Adam** (1723-1790), a political economist and the author of the *Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*.

**Steele, Sir Richard** (1672-1729), was educated at the Charterhouse with Addison, entered the Life-guards and published *The Christian Hero*, 1701; he produced some plays and began the *Tatler*, carrying it on with Addison's help till 1711.

**Strahan, William** (1715-1785), printer and publisher; he left Scotland and entered into partnership with Millar, with whom he produced Johnson's *Dictionary*.

**Swift, Jonathan** (1667-1745), Dryden's cousin, was educated at Kilkenny Grammar School with Congreve, and became Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin. He wrote numerous political pamphlets; his best known works are *A Tale of a Tub*, *The Battle of the Books*, and *Gulliver's Travels*.

**Swinney, Owen Mac** (d. 1754), a playwright and manager of the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket, in 1706, 1710, 1711.

**Taylor, Dr. John** (1711-1788), was educated at Lichfield with Johnson; he became rector of Market Bosworth and was often visited by Johnson at his house in Ashbourne.

**Temple, William Johnson** (1739-1796), an essayist, and the friend of Gray and Boswell. His character of Gray was incorporated by Johnson in the *Lives of the Poets*.

**Thornton, Bonnell** (1724-1768), a miscellaneous writer and wit.

**Thrall, Mr.**, a rich brewer and M.P. for Southwark. He died in 1781.

**Thrall, Mrs.**, see Piozzi, Mrs.

**Toplady, Augustus Montague** (1740-1778), author of the hymn *Rock of Ages*.

**Urban, Sylvanus**, see Cave, Edward.

**Victor, Benjamin** (d. 1778), a theatrical manager and the author of a history of the stage.

**Virgil** (70-19 B.C.), a great Roman poet, author of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid*.



**Voltaire** (1694-1778), poet, dramatist, philosopher, historian, and satirist. His real name was François Arouet. He spent some years in England.

**Waller, Edmund** (1605-1687), the poet, was a member of the Long Parliament; for plotting he was fined and banished, but was pardoned by Cromwell, on whom he published some laudatory verses; this did not prevent him from writing poems of rejoicing on Cromwell's death and the Restoration: he published his *Divine Poems* 1685.

**Warburton, Dr.** (1698-1779), Bishop of Gloucester, published theological works and a defence of Pope's *Essay on Man*; being left Pope's literary executor, he brought out an edition of his works in 1751.

**Warren, Richard** (1731-1797), a doctor who practised in London and became physician to George, Prince of Wales, in 1787.

**Warton, Dr. Joseph** (1722-1800), a critic, who edited Pope's works and began an edition of Dryden.

**Wilkes, John** (1727-1797), M.P. for Aylesbury in 1757 and 1761; founded *The North Briton* and was arrested for libel on George III., published in No. 45, 1763, but was discharged on the ground of privilege as member of parliament; he was expelled from the House of Commons and outlawed; the outlawry was reversed in 1768; after being four times re-elected as M.P. for Middlesex, he was allowed to take his seat in 1774 and eventually became Lord Mayor of London.

**Wilks, Robert** (about 1665-1732), an actor and friend of Savage; manager of the Haymarket and of Drury Lane.

**Williams, Mrs.** (1706-1783), a poetess and an inmate of Johnson's house from 1752. She lost her eyesight through an operation.

**Windham, William** (1750-1810), M.P. for Norwich in 1784 and secretary for war with a seat in the cabinet under Pitt 1794-1801.

**Young, Edward** (1683-1765), was a member of Addison's literary circle. His chief work is *The Complaint; or Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.

## BOSWELL.

*Letters of James Boswell to the Rev. W. J. Temple*, ed. Seccombe.  
7s. 6d. net. (Sidgwick & Jackson.)  
*Life*, by Percy Fitzgerald. 2 vols. 24s. (Chatto & Windus.)

## JOHNSON.

*Life*, by Sir Leslie Stephen, in the English Men of Letters Series.  
1s., 1s. 6d., 2s. net. (Macmillan.)

## BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

Edited by Birkbeck Hill. 6 vols. 42s. net. (Clarendon Press.)  
The Oxford Boswell. 2 vols. 2s. each. (Clarendon Press.)  
Edited by Roger Ingpen. With illustrations. 18s. net. (Pitman.)